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Near East/South Asia Report

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ERRATUM: In JPRS-NEA-85-148 of 18 December 1985 on p 50 in article MEMBER OF KNESSET URGES CUTS IN GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY, please insert the following subslug: /Article by Shevah Weiss, member of Knesset/

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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

VARIOUS GULF COOPERATION EFFORTS DESCRIBED

Riyadh AL-YAMAMAH in Arabic 30 Oct 85 pp 22-25

[Text] The vision is becoming clear that the proposed programs for objective policies and plans to develop sought-after cooperation and coordination between the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council and their people in diverse fields are being implemented by setting up some joint projects that would subsequently serve proposed development plans and guarantee their future. That is because the course of joint coordination under the auspices of the Cooperation Council means cohesion and closeness between the peoples of the region and the creation of a clear and unified outlook and a common direction.

An entity of distinctive fields strives to achieve coordination, integration, and linkage among the member nations in all fields in order to bring about their unity and the deepening and consolidation of the ties, links, and aspects of cooperation among the people of the Gulf, and also to set up corresponding organizations in the various fields including economic affairs, finance, construction, trade, communications, education, culture, information, tourism, athletics, health, and the affairs of Islamic law and justice.

During the last 5 years of the council's existence a number of recommendations and resolutions have been reached, many of which have begun to be implemented, in unified industrial and agricultural fields and in matters of security and self-defense. In the field of foreign policy, both at the international level and with respect to the Arabs, the establishment of a foreign course was clear, embodying the fact that the security and stability of the region are solely the responsibility of its peoples and states and that they have the right to defend their security and preserve their independence and absolutely reject any foreign interference in the region, whatever the source. In the economic fields, the council adopted a policy of economic self-reliance and of working toward economic fusion, uniting the interests of the people of the region, removing barriers, and standardizing services to create a basic foundation for commerce, industry, and agriculture to strengthen the cohesion and assimilation of the citizens through the unified economic agreement on which work was completed in March 1983.

Cooperation Council and the Iraq-Iran War

The supreme council has met 5 times, and the ministerial council has held 21 sessions, of which 14 were ordinary and 7 extraordinary. The Iraq-Iran war headed the agenda of all these sessions, which devoted enough time to discussing ways of ending it and stopping further bloodshed between the two states. The council played a prominent role in the workings of all the sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the Security Council, and it was behind the resolutions issued by it and the urgent appeals by the secretary general of the United Nations. It also kept up contacts with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the nonaligned movement and it was active and vital during the meetings.

Unified Economic Agreement

The unified economic agreement for the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council was signed by their majesties and highnesses (the supreme council) in the city of Riyadh on 15 Muharram 1402 AH, corresponding to 11 December 1981 AD. Its implementation was begun on 1 March 1983 by pursuing a number of steps including giving a description of the national means of transportation to returning transportation means belonging to citizens of any of the council states; granting the necessary facilities to the passage of transit goods; exempting agricultural, animal, and industrial products and those from natural resources from customs duties and fees with similar effects; opening the door to registration in the Gulf states by members of the medical, legal, accounting, engineering, administrative and economic consulting, technical, agricultural, fishing, and industrial professions who are citizens of any of the member states; granting facilities to ships and boats owned by any of the member nations; and treating them as their national counterparts would be treated, both when they anchor in their ports and during their passage. Orders have been issued to implement these economic steps. For example, permission has been granted to citizens of the council to engage in contract activity in the kingdom, whether they are natural or legal persons, and they are exempt from the conditions of the guarantor or agent. The only condition is that they be classified according to the laws that Saudis are subject to and that they do not have the right to act as agents for foreign companies whether in the field of contracts or other fields. Licenses are issued to citizens of council states from the Ministry of Trade and not from the committee of foreign capital investment. The ministry also has the right if it sees fit to require the participation of Saudi citizens at a rate not to exceed 25 percent. That would be for 5 years, after which the activity would be freed in that field.

The supreme council also issued a decree exempting the products of the Cooperation Council states from customs duties and fees having a similar effect and giving a grace period of 1 year to industrial establishments not owned by 51 percent of the citizens of the member states to get an exemption from customs duties and fees with a similar effect.

It was decided to change the Saudi Arabian agency for standards and measures into a Gulf agency having to do with standards and measures in the council states, on condition that the Saudi Arabian agency for standards and measures coordinate with the general secretariat of the council in preparing lists of standards to be sent to the administrative board of the Gulf agency to study the possibility of agreeing on them.

Agreement was also reached on establishing the Gulf Investment Foundation with a capital of $2 billion, and the general secretariat ratified the agreement and the basic organization of the foundation by the governments of all the member states.

Joint Agricultural Policies

The ministerial decree adopted by their excellencies the ministers of agriculture of the council states on 10 January 1983 defined the essential areas of concentration for joint agricultural policies in order to achieve agricultural integration between the states based on a unified strategy that relies on the ideal utilization of available water resources and provides food security based on national sources. The secretariat is charged with drafting a joint agricultural policy based on self-development, increasing production, and encouraging joint projects with participation from the private sector. Data available on available natural resources, those being exploited and those that could be exploited in the future, and on present production levels and the possibility of developing them indicate that the council states are capable of achieving higher levels of self-sufficiency in the production of vegetables and a limited number of fruit varieties and in fish production. The council states have also made great strides in the production of eggs and chickens, and it is expected that they will be self-sufficient within the not-too-distant future. However, it must be stressed that this growth in fact depends on converting from importing finished goods to primary and intermediary ones (feed, breeders, and equipment). The council states might maintain the current level of dairy production (around 25 percent of consumption), but true growth in this sector (though at a lower rate than poultry production), also depends on increasing the imports of constituents, which are milch cows and the dry skim milk and fat used to reconstitute liquid milk, and on making other dairy products in many of the dairy plants in the council states. It is also expected that improvement will rise to the level of self-sufficiency in grain production, especially wheat production, because of the generous support given by the Saudi government. In fact, last season the kingdom became self-sufficient, and considering the cultivated areas, it is certain that it will be more than self-sufficient in the current season. Therefore, the joint agricultural policy which aims for food security can be accepted and relied upon. It must include a new dimension embodied in the introduction of appropriate formulae for cooperation within the group of Cooperation Council states, and between them and other Arab regions, especially neighboring regions. Joint-action programs for the unified strategy include the joint program for coordinating self-sufficient agricultural plans and policies; the joint program for agricultural and food production; the joint program for surveys, utilization, and preservation of natural resources; and the joint program for agricultural research and technical development.

Industry

In the field of industry, the general secretariat cooperated with a United Nations expert to get an idea of the bases for distributing joint projects among the council states. The general secretariat is also currently in contact with the international financing establishment of the World Bank on cooperating with it in preparing a study on joint projects that will be more comprehensive than what the council states are able to do. The secretariat also prepared a study on cement and on iron and steel, since a joint work group will be asked to discuss it so that it can be presented to the industrial cooperation committee and the committee for financial cooperation in order to look into protecting basic industrial products in the council states and providing tariff protection for products in which competitive elements are successful with respect to price, quality, and delivery.

Within the framework of completing a study of incentives before the producing sectors, the general secretariat called upon a committee of experts from the council states to discuss the results of a study of promotional incentives for the private sector before presenting them to the next meeting of the committee for financial and economic cooperation. The supreme council also decided to give priority to national products in the government projects of the member states. Because of the desire to support and encourage industrial products, the possibility will be studied of using a portion of the industrial production of the council states in programs of lending money to development funds in member states and of not using them to finance competitive projects in the council states.

Because of the general secretariat's belief in the importance of strengthening its relations with Arab and international organizations and agencies in various fields of joint action, the Arab organization for industrial development conducted a study on the best areas and means that would guarantee cooperation and continued coordination between the two sides, and a memorandum of understanding was signed that included a number of fields that would carry out the wishes of the two sides in laying down firm foundations for them. A study was prepared on cooperating with one of the houses of international expertise to establish an industry that would ensure that the factories would have the spare parts they need as well as other industries whose economic feasibility has been established, such as an oil refinery, a cement, iron and stell, or aluminum plant, or a petrochemical plant. A comprehensive study has also been carried out on policies relating to developing the workforce needed for industry and how to get the maximum benefit out of training centers now in existence and on the extent to which it would be possible to establish centers specializing in a high degree of qualification to train the workforce in industrial fields and in how to distribute these centers among the council states. It should be mentioned that the study of the workforce in industry includes the oil industry, electricity, and water desalinization plants.

Oil and Gas

In the field of oil and gas, practical measures were taken with regard to the subject of insurance and the measures that were taken by the insurance agencies with regard to shipping exports of the member nations in this region. Preparations were also made to lay down a single marketing policy for all oil and liquid gas products sold by council nations, in addition to establishing a schedule of quantities to be exported by each state for the information of the markets to which the products would be sent and of other competitors from other states. Coordination in consultation that the member states had arrived at was strengthened, such as with regard to raising or lowering the price of gas sales. It was also agreed to begin laying a pricing foundation for the Gulf region that would be used as a guide in the future in the process of pricing, so that the region will emerge in its judicial person as one of the pricing places of the world.

In view of the benefit provided by gas in lowering costs and reducing the burden on the consumption of refined products, and of the easing of some of the difficulties of production, planning, and programming of crude oil by the member states that is derived from the use of gas, it was decided to form a committee to study the best ways of providing gas to electrical-generating stations and water desalination plants, including building a network to distribute the gas. In fact, an understanding was reached with one of the specialized international companies to conduct a preliminary study of the project, and this study has been completed. The general secretariat has also completed preparing the technical elements necessary to study the markets and the probable supply and demand up to the year 2000.

In the area of strategic petroleum reserves, the general secretariat is discussing and studying this subject from its security, strategic, and military angles, and the ministers of petroleum agreed to this measure. Agreement has also been reached on the need to start preparing proposed studies on laying down long- and short-term plans to build reservoirs, along with defining their specifications and locations in a way that will achieve flexibility in getting supplies from them. They also advised of the need to improve distribution systems and increase their flexibility.

Transport and Communications

In the area of setting up maritime supports, the recommendation was made to establish a Gulf company that would take the place of the one that is now setting up and maintaining maritime supports, and it was decided to standardize the bases, standards, and systems for classifying ships as a first step toward establishing a specialized agency in the future.

The general secretariat also released the view of the legal administration on the ideal legal framework of the draft agreement to combat maritime piracy and deception and maritime fraud among council states in light of what the member states see concerning the subjects, since the general secretariat has received the responses of some of the states concerning them.

With regard to the railway sector and to linking states of the Cooperation Council by a railway, the general secretariat distributed the final study on the economic feasibility of this project to the member states. It also contracted with one of the international consulting companies to study the possibility of establishing a company for coastal transport to serve transport activity between council states, and it has contacted the World Bank to authorize a study of establishing a company for maritime transport between the council states as well.

In the area of integration between the council states in the field of communications, efforts are continuing to coordinate with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development to carry out a study concerning this integration, to bring about technical coordination in the field of communications, and to standardize rates and telegraph and telephone services. In the field of aviation, agreement has been reached on supporting Saudi Arabia's candidacy to the board of the Civil Aviation Agency to represent the rest of the council states in that agency. It was also agreed to change Saudi Arabia's office in Montreal into a joint office for all the member states in the Civil Aviation Agency.

Social, Cultural, and Education Approach

In the area of approaching one another on social, cultural, and educational matters, efforts are being increased to translate the aims of the Cooperation Council into practical, tangible reality by preparing a draft strategy for joint action among the member states in the fields of education, youth, athletics, human resources, social affairs, culture, the environment, and health and by laying down plans and programs, following up on their implementation, and evaluating the extent to which they have achieved the goals for which they were set up. Cooperation with international, Arab, and regional organizations working in thehuman and environmental fields is also aimed at.

These efforts have achieved good results with respect to youth programs in the council states as embodied in the establishment of Gulf University in Bahrain, the first cultural fair for the youth of the Cooperation Council of Arab Gulf states held to Tokyo, Japan, from 5-12 Mujarram 1406, and other competitions which are meant to bring about mutual contact between the young people of the Gulf.

Future of the Gulf

We conclude our presentation of the achievements which were realized through cooperation and integration between the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council during the past 5 years of its existence and which covered all possible fields of cooperation, by saying that the future of this cooperation bodes well, creates out of this Gulf Unity the nucleas of greater unity among other Arab regions, and makes it an example to be followed in setting up any regional unity among a group of states which share a common belief, religion, geography, and common interests. There are still many who look expectantly to this region on the road to progress and prosperity.

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12547/13167
CSO: 4404/91

BRIEFS

KLIBI-SOVIET-AMERICAN CONTACTS--A high-level Arab source has mentioned that the United States and the Soviet Union have informed Chedli Klibi, the secretary general of the Arab League, through their ambassadors in Tunis, of the results of the Geneva summit that brought together President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev. The source stated that the Soviet ambassador assured Klibi that any detente or "normalization" of relations would not affect, in any way, his country's firm stance in support of the Arab and Palestinian issues. The Soviet ambassador also stated that the news that was repeated in the West about a probable development in Soviet-Israeli relations and the question of the emigration of Soviet Jews has no sound basis but is a "maneuver" aimed at dealing a blow to Arab-Soviet friendship. In response, the American ambassador stated that the Reagan administration intends to "consult" with Soviet officials concerning a number of conflicts and regional problems including the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Gulf war, and Afghanistan. However, the American ambassador did not explain to what extent Washington will cooperate with Moscow to create a settlement of these conflicts. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 14 Dec 85 p 9] /8309

CSO: 4504/128

MOROCCAN POSITION ON WESTERN SAHARA CRITICIZED

Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French 26 Nov 85 p 1

[Editorial by E.M.: "Rabat's Bragging"]

[Text] Even for an expert in fabrications, it is certainly pulling off a real masterpiece to accumulate in so few lines so many untruths and so much bad faith as the MAROC-SOIR editorial writer has just done, as an audulatory echo to an interview with King Hassan II which was published by an accommodating across-the-Mediterranean weekly--an interview which is itself, it must be said, a bit of an anthology when it comes to "free interpretation" of facts and situations.

Throughout the web of contradictions and flagrant distortions, however, there is one point on which we will agree: the Western Sahara affair "is one of great clarity". Not, however, in the sense that Morocco claims, but rather in the opposite sense. In fact, it is clearly and simply a matter of a people that wants to exercise its imprescriptible right to self-determination and independence and is fighting for that right. And that is not solely Algeria's point of view, contrary to what MAROC-SOIR would have us believe. It is also the opinion of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, which has ruled out all of the quibbling over "allegiance" and "sovereignty" presented by Rabat. It is also the opinion of the whole of Africa, which by consensus adopted Resolution 104, of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the United Nations Organization, which supported the African peace plan. Again just recently, 92 countries belonging to the UN confirmed that they held the same point of view, as being the only one likely to solve the Western Saharan problem. Is MAROC-SOIR going to accuse all of them of "fraud", as it did for Algeria?

The matter is clear, and consequently the solution is easy: it is enough to allow the Saharan people their self-determination. This really means, not by trying to "organize" a confirming plebiscite, under the threat of bayonets, as Morocco proposes, but through a free and controlled referendum, after a ceasefire agreement between the two belligerents and after withdrawal of the Moroccan occupation forces. That is the course recommended by Africa, the Non-Aligned nations and the UN, and by rejecting it Rabat is obviously demonstrating--no matter what it says--its stubborn opposition to the Saharan people's right to self-determination, its opposition to peace.

It is true that when one firmly accepts the idea that "war is a blessing", one is hardly showing a pacific spirit. It remains to be seen whether the Moroccan worker who sweats for starvation wages, whether the Moroccan soldier whose life is at stake every day in the sands, either of whom is in the midst of tragedy--whether they, too believe that "war is a blessing". One has to think that Rabat cares very little for "those little ones".

Rabat prefers to run ahead. It prefers to continue to falsely put forward an "Algerian-Moroccan conflict" that exists only in its propaganda, to accuse Algeria of causing all its ills, to slander it grossly to the point of getting itself involved in ridicule. MAROC-SOIR, in this escalation, is exposing itself to risky comparisons that are worth their weight in burlesque, in which blindness vies with untruthfulness. It is a question, it says, of regime, between the "constitutional, pluralistic, democratic and liberal" regime of the Moroccan monarchy and the regime, "against the aspirations of the people", of the Algerian Republic. To hear MAROC-SOIR tell it, the Moroccan citizen lives in a paradise of freedom and prosperity, while the Algerian citizen is oppressed and miserable!

As for the real, dramatic situation of the Moroccan people, we merely advise the MAROC-SOIR editorial writer to read the reports appearing periodically in the international press: is freedom doing well in the prisons of Kenitra? Is prosperity being expressed in the hunger riots in Casablanca and elsewhere? As for the Algerian people, they have just provided, in the eyes of the world, a positive demonstration of their total freedom, in the most complete democracy, on the occasion of the great debate on enriching the National Charter. The humblest citizen was able to make himself heard there publicly, in peace, with the profound conviction that he was not doing anything but exercising his natural right, and that his contribution would be welcome. With the conviction, too, that the outcome of the debate would lead to the people's aspirations being taken into account increasingly by the political leadership chosen by the people. Moroccan "pluralism" is very careful not to allow such free expression! This is a "risk" one does not take unless one is assured of unshakable popular support.

Even more solemnly than we have done, history will tell of all the difference that separates Algiers from Rabat, with respect to freedom, prosperity, progress and peace. It will say that the unanimous Algerian political leadership, with President Chadli Bendjedid at its head, faithfully reflecting the profound sentiment of the entire Algerian people, has never deviated from a fraternal attitude toward the Moroccan people. That the highest-ranking official in Algeria, the leader and spokesman elected by all the people, has spared no effort toward neighborliness and fruitful cooperation with Morocco, in the context of a united, powerful and prosperous Maghrib, from which all the peoples of the Maghrib would benefit. But history will also say that Rabat, a victim of hazy dreams and attacks of vanity, tried to turn its back on the future.

What good are Rabat's vain threats? Algeria's calm strength could not be frightened by them. We are told, loudly, that "the Moroccan army is the best, the only one of the world's armies that is operational in the war of the sands", that in 1963, the Moroccan generals were assured of "Friday prayers in the Oran Mosque". Why did they not go there if they were able to? They were not able to in 1963, following a treacherous aggression perpetrated when

Algeria was barely getting back on its feet after its glorious war of liberation, and had only the heroism of its ALN [National Liberation Army] djounoud [translation unknown], who were poorly armed, to defend the sacred soil. Could they do it at present, when our country is protected by its spearhead, the People's National Army, which is modern and efficient? Prayers in Oran for them would just be the prayers of the absent ones! Today, the "best army in the world" is stuck in the sand in the war of the sands. The Polisario Front militants have known for more than 10 years that it is necessary to think about it and keep it in mind. It is not the Moroccan soldier who is bad, but the cause he is made to support. It is not a good army for a bad cause. The French army, one of the most powerful of our time, lost the war in Algeria, and we could cite other examples. Algeria, the Algerian people and its People's National Army fear no aggressor, big or small. It is futile to delude oneself in this regard, because it would just mean exposing oneself to serious misadventures.

Thus, to Algeria's tireless efforts to bring to an end, with honor and wisdom, the fratricidal conflict between the Moroccan and Saharan peoples, which is barring the road to the unity of the Arab Maghreb and to the expansion of the entire region, Rabat persists in answering by twirling swords and by empty boasts. Is anyone thinking of causing us to be afraid, making us abandon respect for principles, of inciting us to haggling and compromises at the expense of a brother people? To think thus is really not to know much about the November Revolution, not to know much about the November generation which, with the indestructibel support of the Algerian people, presides over the destinies of Algeria, freedom, peace and progress; such are the objectives for which the Algerian people sacrificed a 1.5 million of its children. They remain sacred to them and they suffer no attack, from anyone at all. Those who would be so imprudent as to forget it, to think they can stand in its way, would find it out very quickly at their own expense.

8946
CSO: 4519/33

ALGERIA

TRIAL, SENTENCING OF 31 REPORTED

Paris LE MONDE in French 15 Nov 85 p 3

[Article by Frederic Fritscher: "Thirty-One Convictions Following Incidents at Tizi-Ouzou"]

[Text] The persons who were questioned following the recent incidents in Tizi-Ouzou, who are still being held, were convicted of having been caught in the act by the sitting city court. Thirty-one sentences were pronounced, according to the official agency, the Algerian Press Service (APS), "against the perpetrators of damage of public and private property: vehicles set on fire, school buses wrecked, public buildings damaged." Nine persons were sentenced to 10 years at the prison farm, 5 to 18 months, 15 to 1 year and 2 to 6 months suspended. "The trial of 15 persons was postponed pending additional information", the APS adds, and 6 others were released.

The arrests took place following the clashes that burst out spontaneously at the exit of the Tizi-Ouzou stadium on 31 October, where several thousand people had just attended a match between the very popular local team, the JETs [expansion unknown], and Bouffarik, which had gone on for several days, winning over other towns of the governorate (district).

Already, the week before, strikes in the educational institutions of the region and demonstrations by highschool and college students who were demanding the release of members of the Algerian Human Rights League, the Berber Cultural Movement and the Associations of the Sons of Chouhada [translation unknown] (martyrs of the war of independence) had taken place. This was a sign of an effervescence which degenerated after the sentencing on 29 October of the Kabyle singer Ait Menguellet to three years in prison for illegal possession of hunting and war weapons.

Despite the palpable desire on the part of the local authorities and the protestors' representatives to resolve the problems by getting together, the Kabyles, who are generally quick to flare up, may have considered these sentences as provocation by the government. How will they react? The question is worrying the authorities as important political dates draw nearer: the meeting of the party's central committee at the end of the month and an extraordinary congress in December that will bring to a close more than 4 months of debates on the enrichment of the National Charter.

8946
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EGYPT

PERES' PEACE PROPOSALS CRITICIZED

Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI in Arabic 18 Nov 85 pp 48-51

[Article by Dr Khalid Mahmud al-Kumi: "Israeli Peace...After the Raid on Tunis"]

[Text] We have followed recently the statements of Mr Shimon Peres, leader of the Israeli Labor Party and prime minister, concerning his offer of a peace deal with Jordan. Some Western newspapers reported this offer under different headlines, most of which can be summed up by saying that Peres is proposing to Jordan to put an end, immediately, to the state of war between the two countries. News agencies reported that Mr Peres stood before the UN General Assembly in New York on 22 October 1985 to announce his proposal to Jordan to bring an immediate end to the state of war with Israel and suggested as well that a limited number of teams of advisors meet within 30 days to discuss arrangements for organizing an international conference to work toward holding direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries for the purpose of signing a "peace treaty" and finding a solution to the Palestinian problem.

Mr Peres did not miss the chance to mention the Soviet Union (which has not reestablished diplomatic relations with Israel) by stating that "some permanent members of the Security Council who are invited to participate in this proposed conference have circumscribed their diplomatic relations with only one of the parties to the conflict, thus excluding themselves from undertaking any role in (those) negotiations." This is a clear allusion to Israel's position of opposing any kind of Soviet participation in a Middle East peace conference so long as the Soviet Union is determined to maintain the severance of relations with Israel. (It is no secret that this allusion is not without a certain degree of political flirtation with the Soviets.)

Israeli Diplomatic Offensive

Thus, we are facing a new "Israeli diplomatic offensive," this time under the slogan of peace with the Arabs in general and with Jordan in particular, an Israeli offensive against us waged exactly 3 weeks to the day after its air raid on Tunis and the PLO headquarters there on 1 October 1985 (see our article on this subject in issue No 875, 21 October 1985).

Are we, I wonder, with Israel living through a time similar to the old Pax Romana era? And is history repeating itself? Does Israel want to remind us of past epochs when Rome used to impose war and peace on the peoples of the world at whim whenever it felt like it during bygone eras when it controlled the entire Mediterranean Sea, calling it "Mare Nostrum," Our Sea, an era known historically as "Pax Romana," the Roman Peace? (Mussolini used to dream about restoring this era, in contemporary times, but everyone knows what became of this fascist "il Duce.")

I am still wondering if we, in this area of 10th luck, are living in a new kind of Israeli peace along the lines of the old Roman peace?

How do we explain what goes on around us these days? An Israeli military raid against an Arab country on 1 October 1985 followed by another Israeli raid of a different kind, holding out the olive branch and raising the slogan of peace on 22 October 1985! Is this not the exact embodiment of the meaning of an armed peace?

At any rate, a large number of neutral observers have noticed, heretofore, that the "peace offer" submitted by Peres is a very general and, at the same time, very ambiguous deal in the absence of any details or explanations in this regard on the part of the Israeli leader. Perhaps this is reason enough for some people to say even now that Peres' declaration is nothing but a political maneuver known in the art of international propaganda as the policy of offensive propaganda. These people justify their allegation by the fact that recent statements by the Israeli prime minister are a carefully studied ploy aimed (among other things) at absorbing the negative reaction against Israel following its deliberate aggression against Tunis and the PLO headquarters, which claimed a large number of innocent lives. This aggression aroused not only the ire of Arabs but that of broad sectors of European and international public opinion as well, including those who have been traditional supporters of Israel.

Furthermore, what has Peres lost, especially since he worded his proposal in a way that renders it unacceptable to the very people he meant to address? (All this notwithstanding, we have heard that he was met upon his return with widespread criticism because of this proposal on the part of a large number of Israeli ministers and party officials led, naturally, by Sharon!) See how Israel plays, with unparalleled professionalism, the casting game within its establishment!

Jordanian Rejection of Proposal

In any case, news agencies on 27 October 1985 reported that King Husayn had rejected these Israeli proposals, reiterating his country's position that any Middle East peace negotiations must be held through an international peace conference to include all the permanent members of the UN Security Council, including the Soviet Union, and the PLO as well as a main party to any Middle East peace process. The Jordanian prime minister then confirmed Husayn's proposals for peace!

Egypt and Syria As Well

News agencies also reported on 26 October 1985 President Mubarak's statements concerning the Peres proposals which said that the president had defended the Palestinian cause and "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to set up their own state" and also the necessity of PLO participation in any peace settlement in the Middle East "in its capacity as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The world press commented that this was considered a "tacit rejection" of Peres' proposals.

Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad rejected the same proposals, reiterating his opposition to any tendency toward individual solutions.

All this notwithstanding, we will focus in this report on the seriousness and credibility, or lack thereof, of Peres' recent statement by exploring Peres' fundamentally political and partisan stance on the possibilities of a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem. Our aim is to put such statements to the test in an effort to evaluate whether they are a kind of "political maneuvering" for local consumption, for example. Hence we will take the reader back to the political and partisan backdrop, on which Peres and his party leaned in this regard, and through the Israeli Labor Party's 1980 platform as the main party document and the social and political contract the party is supposed to honor before its constituents and bases. This platform, 5 years ago, talked about what it called the "Jordanian option."

I. A Glance at Peres' Political Stance on Possible Peaceful Settlement of Conflict

Before going into the details of the "Jordanian option" as contained in the Israeli Labor Party's December 1980 platform, I would like to bring the reader up to date on the political climate surrounding Mr Peres' ideas about the Palestinian question and how the man thinks, or does not think, about the possibilities of a peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict. Allow me to choose an altercation between Peres and former Austrian Chancellor Kreisky at one of the Socialist International meetings over the Palestinian question and the PLO. This altercation occurred right after the tripartite meeting in Vienna in July 1979 which brought together Yasir 'Arafat and Willy Brandt (president of the Socialist International) at Kreisky's invitation. This meeting infuriated Peres, who vented his rage on the former Austrian chancellor whom he accused of giving 'Arafat a golden opportunity to boost his prestige and buttress his political position, thus conferring upon him a kind of international recognition without any ideological or pragmatic changes on 'Arafat's part, as Peres put it.

In this altercation, Peres talked at length about his point of view, as leader of the Israeli Labor Party (a member of the Socialist International), regarding the Palestinian question and his acclaim of the so-called "Jordanian option."

Peres pointed out before his Socialist International comrades that a solution to the Palestinian problem would solve Israel's problems as well "for we have no desire whatsoever to control the destinies of others because we do not have divine forgiveness nor do we play the role of 'herrenvolk,' the masters of Creation. We do not want to rule between 1 and 2 million other Arabs because freedom means not to be ruled by others or to be someone else's ruler," as he put it during that altercation. Peres expressed the following reservations concerning the 'Arafat-Kreisky-Brandt encounter:

A. The Palestinian National Charter still stipulates the necessity of doing away with Israel.

B. Terrorism is unacceptable and no democratic socialist element can allow, accept, or tolerate it.

C. The PLO is like a "supermarket" with a half-dozen organizations, all subject to the orders of various Arab governments over which 'Araft has no control.

D. The Vienna meeting (July 1979) underscored the fact that 'Arafat had not changed, but that his prestige and standing had been buttressed. The final outcome was a boost to his recognized position without any ideological or pragmatic changes on his part.

E. We (Peres) do not doubt the good intentions surrounding the Vienna meeting. However, this meeting is out of touch with reality. Here Peres expressed his delight over abandoning the idea of inviting the PLO to the upcoming general conference of socialist countries which was held in Madrid in 1980, "notwithstanding the fact that that rumor has hurt our party."

F. The Socialist International must not turn into a "supermarket" for UN policy. It must live and act in accordance with the ideological principles which brought it into being. He added: "I am confident--and we will spare no effort--to make sure that our true loyalty will always be with the Socialist International and that understanding between us will go on in the future as it has in the past." Perhaps the above passages shed enough light on the kind of hatred Peres harbors for the PLO (or for any organized Palestinian entity) and the kind of burning jealousy of any international gain it might achieve, and how he is ready to do the impossible to prevent that. Hence, how is the Israeli Labor Party and its leader different from any Israeli party with regard to the general political position on the PLO and the Palestinian question (with the exception, of course, of a handful of leaders and individuals who are relatively sympathetic)?!

Perhaps a review at this point of what the Israeli Labor Party's 1980 platform said about the Jordanian option will clarify this issue:

II. Israeli Labor Party Platform and the "Jordanian Option"

Before going into what this party's platform said about the Jordanian option, I would like to point out briefly that former Austrian Chancellor Kreisky, the preeminent leader of Socialist International who had the opportunity to play a tangible role in the attempts to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in the forefront of which is the Palestinian issue as the main key to the solution of these issues, always used to intimate in his talks and statements that he favored the view expressed in the Israeli Labor Party's electoral platform of 19 December 1980, concerning what was known as the Jordanian option, even before this platform was officially announced.

Perhaps this position of Kreisky's was due to his conviction, in general, of the Israeli Labor Party's policies, with some differences over certain points and positions, compared to the policies and positions of other Israeli parties, including the Likud, concerning a possible solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, from Kreisky's point of view.

So What About the Jordanian Option in the Israeli Labor Party Platform Since 19 December 1980?

In its platform the party put forth three options--the Jordanian option, autonomy, and the maintenance of the status quo--to deal with the Palestinian question. The Jordanian option was based on the Israeli Labor Party's fundamental position on foregoing, at this stage, the principle of "preserving all Israeli territory" in favor of a purely Jewish state (note the terms used in the text).

It also rejected the idea of keeping a large number of Arabs within the borders of the Jewish state for fear of this state being turned into a dual-nationality state in the not-too-distant future. (Does this paragraph not explain the party's awful hostile position toward the proposal 'Arafat had at one time put forth concerning a secular state in Palestine despite all the progressive slogans the party raises in various circles?!)

The platform goes on to say in the third paragraph: "The objective behind the establishment of Israel was to set up a democratic independent Jewish state. To preserve this historical objective, the Likud policy aimed at annexing the West Bank and Gaza must be rejected because it leads to the transformation of Israel from a Jewish state into a dual-nationality state."

The Israeli Labor Party's platform presented the Jordanian option "on the basis of setting up a Jordanian-Palestinian state on the East Bank of the Jordan River and a part of the West Bank and Gaza in addition to specific densely populated areas in the West Bank and Gaza," according to the 13th paragraph of the platform. Part of this state west of the Jordan River would be demilitarized and the entire state would be surrounded by Israeli military bases and positions, as indicated in the 14th and 18th paragraphs of the same platform.

Moreover, the 14th paragraph stipulates that "the territory of the Jordanian-Palestinian state shall be demilitarized and no foreign army may cross the area located west of the Jordan River. Demilitarization must not impede the enforcement of agreed-upon security measures related to Israel's existence." The platform stipulated in its 18th paragraph that the evacuation of Israeli Army forces from its positions is essential for Israeli security, such as airports in North Sinai and Eilat, and that "the removal of settlements in Sinai shall not be a precedent for designating boundaries in other sectors."

The platform's fifth article stipulates that a "unified Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty is the capital of Israel and the freedom of worship in the holy places shall be preserved and coexistence among their inhabitants shall be guaranteed. The composition of the city's municipal council shall reflect its individuality and unity and also the need to afford all inhabitants the opportunity to express their growing involvement in managing their affairs."

This is what was said in the Israeli Labor Party's platform about the Jordanian option. The only comment I have is to urge the reader to reread the aforementioned paragraphs carefully to understand better many matters contained in the platform's language.

Palestinian Viewpoint

As for the Palestinian viewpoint concerning this option, I believe it was expressed at the time by one loyal Palestinian, the late 'Isam al-Sartawi, Yasir 'Arafat's advisor. 'Isam al-Sartawi used to maintain close relations with Chancellor Kreisky. Indeed, he was the unknown soldier who was the PLO contact with the Socialist International as well as the de facto architect of the aforementioned famous July 1979 meeting between 'Arafat, Kreisky, and Brandt in Vienna. Despite al-Sartawi's close relations with Kreisky, he disagreed with him over his firm belief in the possibilities of negotiations and peace at the hand of the Israeli Labor Party. Al-Sartawi emphasized that international public opinion must take note of what he called the dangerous nature of the settlement plan in the Middle East as proposed by the Israeli Labor Party in its electoral platform (see MIDDLE EAST REVIEW, March 1981). 'Isam al-Sartawi cautioned that this platform was based on the four no's, which were: No to the PLO, no to Palestinian self-determination, no to the return to the June 1967 borders, and no to withdrawal from Jerusalem. Add to that the fact that his platform, according to al-Sartawi, was based on total denial of Palestinian national right. (May God have mercy upon you, O al-Sartawi. He was assassinated by evil hands in Lisbon, Portugal, a few years ago while attending the meeting of the Socialist International.)

So this is not a new reading of old papers. Are not Peres' peace proposals the same old drink he is offering in a new cup?

And the cup is full!

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EGYPT

ISRAEL WINS OUT IN 'ACHILLE LAURO' AFFAIR

Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI in Arabic 11 Nov 85 pp 18-21

[Article by Dr Ahmad 'Amir: "The Winner in the Game of Poisoning American-Egyptian Relations"]

[Text] The Italian ship "Achille Lauro" has returned to Port Sa'id on a new cruise, surrounded by many unsolved mysteries and engulfed in secrecy and ambiguity following the Port Sa'id negotiations which the Egyptian authorities skillfully concluded in record time that startled the United States itself. This diplomatic success, which was unexpected even by the most optimistic circles, was followed by the American action of forcing the Egyptian 737 Boeing aircraft, carrying the Palestinians, to land at the Sigonella airport at a NATO base in Sicily.

Question in Search of an Answer

Thus occurred the act of piracy and the violation of international norms by a superpower and a permanent member of the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of world peace, as if to say that 40 years after the establishment of the United Nations it is all over with world peace (!) This leaves a deep crack in the wall of Egyptian-American relations, that edifice which each of the two countries was supposed to reinforce rather than crack. I wonder who was the winner and beneficiary of the poisoning of Egyptian-American relations, thus transforming rapprochement and mutual support into tension, alienation, and stubbornness, if not a collision. The answer to this question is important if we are to measure accurately Egyptian public reaction to the arrogant American behavior which can be described as muscle-flexing against a country bound to the United States by special relations. It is behavior difficult to justify, let alone explain. Many aspects of this incident remain unexplained, thus raising controversy, speculation, and anticipation. They will remain an enigma until the coming days unveil their secrets. But the repercussions of this incident on the growing American-Egyptian relations remain negative. It is true that international law remains a law of interests in the sense that its principles are upheld so long as they do not infringe upon state interests; however, when these precepts of international law conflict with state interests, the state has to threaten international law and custom, and indeed morals, because interests are the only reality governing international dealings and regulating the principles of foreign political behavior. This is the basis of the adage "tell me where state interests lie and I will tell you what foreign policy is." In other words, the foreign policy of any state lies in its interests because a state has no enemies or friends, only interests. Therefore, every country, large or small, is always eager not to disturb its relations with other countries in any way. Speaking of this crack in Egyptian-American relations due to American rudeness, it is incompatible even with the spirit of American foreign policy set forth by American President George Washington, who said in his farewell address at the turn of the 18th century that "nothing should be avoided more than an endless strong hatred against some countries or love and very strong bonds with others. We must honor good and equitable relations with all countries without exception, for any country that indulges in excessive hatred or excessive love for another country is, to a certain extent, a slave to this country. It is a slave to its love or its hostility and both cases lead it to neglect its responsibilities toward itself and its interests." What a difference between this advice and the misconceived American action against the Egyptian airliner. We realize that muscle-flexing and threats of violence are familiar tactics in the conduct of American foreign policy, as expressed by former Secretary of State Dulles in the early fifties through the policy of brinksmanship. But with whom? With a friendly country which maintains special relations with the United States? What kind of logic is this, considering the dearth of information about this incident which is still shrouded with considerable ambiguity which will be cleared up in time, especially if we take into consideration the PLO's announcement that the "Achille Lauro" hijacking was neither its goal nor its intent. So I wonder, who allowed this operation to take a different turn which was not the ultimate goal?

The Clock Turns Backward!

Let us go back to recent history to open its lockers, now that it has divulged some of its secrets, and turn the clock back to 1954. A period of 30 years has a sobering effect because most factual information would have had a chance to come out without the pressures of propaganda and media hype. History to a politician is an experimental ground where he can turn over its pages to see, observe, and ponder over the influence of the decision-makers. A step into the sphere of history takes us back to the "Lavon" affair, or what Israel later called the "Lavon scandal." Most of the secrets of this incident have come out although all the documents have not been published. It is through such facts, however, that designs and intentions are revealed because the events of history are not mere stories to be told and retold, for history is not just a science of past events but rather the science of the future because it is forever like a test laboratory. Furthermore, historical events are useful in teaching and guiding contemporary political behavior, especially since our relations with the United States are undergoing a process of reexamination in public opinion and at the official level. Hence, the clock is turned back 30 years to pause before the 1954 Lavon scandal. So how did this story come about?

In 1953, American elections installed the Republican candidate, Eisenhower, at the head of the American administration, which followed a foreign policy based on confronting the Soviet challenge and a policy of containment toward Soviet influence by establishing a series of military alliances. And since Eisenhower was a military man, he gave priority and special attention to military alliances instead of economic aid. Hence the American administration's attempt during Eisenhower's first term to polarize the Arab countries, headed by Egypt, toward the Western orbit. Eisenhower tried at first to maintain neutrality in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but this direction created tension in American-Israeli relations because Israel feared the policy of binding the Arabs to a military alliance with the West; it opposed this orientation for fear of the Arabs using Western weapons against it and of possible neutrality achieved at the expense of the total American partiality to Israel. Israel viewed the Republican rise to power in 1953 as a loss for Israel, not because the Republican Party maintained a neutral stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict but because it was less biased toward Israel than the Democratic Party. In other words, American policy at the beginning of the Eisenhower administration sought to incorporate the Arab world, led by Egypt, into its international system of containment and deterrence aimed at the Soviet Union. Egypt's incorporation into the Western defense system required that Egypt be courted and lured into the Western camp. However, this direction not only collided with American attempts to take care of Israel but also resulted in strained American-Israeli relations. Israel perceived a grave danger to its existence in the attempts of American Secretary of State Dulles to court the Arab countries, Egypt in particular, in order to lure them into an alliance with the West. Dulles, in his efforts and endeavors to win the favor of the Arabs and Egypt, tended to talk and behave in ways that caused misunderstandings between Israel and America. Israel's concerns and apprehensions were aroused by a statement Dulles gave upon assuming his post as secretary of state that, as of that date, America would follow a friendly and unbiased policy between Israel and the Arabs. Israel's concern about its future security was aggravated by these developments as well as by the deterioration of its position due to another series of incidents which led to a palpable improvement in relations between Washington and Cairo whereby the Washington government began, in Israel's opinion, to use unusual harshness with Israel. Israel's fears were reinforced by Eisenhower's decision in 1953 to disapprove a $75 million loan to Israel. In May 1953, Dulles visited Cairo, as part of his Middle East tour, with a view to arranging a conciliation between the Arabs and Israel and thus persisting in the policy of containment against the Soviet Union through political and military alliances. Dulles returned from his trip with a new impression that the Arabs feared the Israeli threat much more than the Soviet Communist threat. Moreover, the Eisenhower government in the summer of 1953 protested to Israel its intention to move its capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Israel's apprehensions about the American policy, which was aimed at rapprochement with the revolutionary government in Egypt, were confirmed when, in October 1953, America decided to cut economic aid to Israel following

Israel's refusal to comply with the UN truce committee's resolutions to stop work on the hydroelectric pumping station near Banat Ya'qub bridge on the River Jordan, pending Security Council debates on the issue. Hence Israel's apprehensions about America's policy of detente with the Egyptian government were heightened and Israel viewed the new American initiatives as disappointing and as a new element heretofore unfamiliar to it, the country which had enjoyed total American support, regardless of its actions. These facts seemed more important to Israel in view of Eisenhower's efforts to be openly friendly with the government of the Egyptian July revolution and to minimize the importance of American ties to and relations with Israel. America was seeking to gain the favor of the "new regime in Egypt" and to cooperate with it in order to bring it into the Western sphere of influence, particularly since the new rulers in Egypt had sought since 1952 to gain the favor of the Washington government out of fear of British intervention in the king's favor. Washington responded to these endeavors and relations between Cairo and Washington improved when Eisenhower started getting tough with Israel, exercising increased pressure on Britain to show more understanding toward the evacuation negotiations with the Egyptian government which culminated in the signing of the July 1954 evacuation agreement. These developments were important for two reasons: first, the evacuation of British troops from the Canal would remove an important buffer between Israel and Egypt. Consequently, Israel did not want Britain to withdraw from the Canal because the British Army in Egypt would distract the Egyptians and serve as a barrier. Second, American rapprochement with Egypt would pose grave dangers to Israeli security, hence Israel's reckless response aimed at the impeding British withdrawal from the Canal and at undermining the policy of rapprochement between America and Egypt. So what did Israel do?

Israel...Poisoning

The Moshe Sharet government in Israel was leading a trend advocating small concessions to the Arabs and a measure of flexibility after the then-Israeli prime minister and minister of defense since Israel's creation in May 1948, Ben Gurion, had left his position for a while in 1954 to be replaced by Moshe Sharet. Ben Gurion moved to the "Sadih Bokr" kibbutz in the Negev desert, ostensibly to give up politics and live a retired life as a farmer while, in fact, he was engaged in secret work with a group of Defense Ministry officers, including his closest aide, Shimon Peres (the current prime minister), who at the time was director general of the Israeli Defense Ministry, and Moshe Dayan, then chief of staff of the Israeli Army, who were following developments in the growing American-Egyptian relations. The Sadih Bokr settlement in the Negev desert was thus transformed into a virtual supreme political and military command in disregard for the policies of the official prime minister, Moshe Sharet, and his cabinet in Tel Aviv. Ben Gurion and his aides, Shimon Peres and Moshe Dayan, masterminded a terrorist subversive conspiracy as a cheap, desperate attempt to undermine America's new policy behind the back of the then-Israeli defense minister, Pinhas Lavon, who was kept in the dark. Ben Gurion forged Lavon's signature on orders authorizing the conspiracy and issued personal orders from the Sadih Bokr kibbutz to Israeli intelligence to carry out the subversive operation against American and British interests in Egypt with a view to harming American-Egyptian relations and convincing America and Britain that Egypt was untrustworthy and unstable and that 'Abd-al-Nasir was unable to control his country with a view to dislodging the domestic front in Egypt. The Israelis smuggled one of their military intelligence officers into Egypt to recruit a network of young Jewish Egyptians to do the dirty work, but the terrorist conspiracy failed miserably when an incendiary grenade went off in the pocket of a Jewish Israeli operative in front of a movie theatre in Alexandria and the Israeli agent confessed to the conspiracy. The entire Israeli subversive network fell into the hands of Egyptian security forces who announced the discovery of an Israeli spy network which tried in 1954 to bomb the American embassy in Cairo and American and British offices and interests in Egypt with a view to creating tension in American-Egyptian and British-Egyptian relations. Egyptian security authorities thus foiled Israel's plans by arresting the Israeli terrorists and announcing plans to bring them to trial. The Israeli government, however, openly stated that the whole incident was a sham without a shred of truth to it! The members of the Israeli terrorist network were brought to trial on charges of conspiracy to commit sabotage and premeditated attempts to bomb and harm certain foreign installations in Egypt with the aim of weakening the domestic front in Egypt, undermining stability, and harming Egypt's relations with friendly countries, including the United States, whose offices were targeted for bombing by Israeli operatives for the purpose of poisoning Egyptian-American relations. The court handed down different sentences against 13 defendants, including 3 death sentences. On the last day of January 1955, two of the three defendants who received the death sentence were executed and the third committed suicide in prison before the sentence was pronounced. The death sentence was carried out despite a vehement international campaign led by Ben Gurion, who had returned to his post as defense minister following a quiet quasi-military coup imposed by the Israeli military establishment in an attempt to cover up its collusion in the conspiracy which had caused a stink despite the news blackout Israel imposed on that scandal, forcing Defense Minister Lavon to resign in protest of this situation which had been forced on him and had injured his reputation for something he did not do and to pressure 'Abd-al-Nasir into reducing the death sentences against the Israeli agents, a campaign for which he was able to recruit Eisenhower and Churchill who wrote to 'Abd-al-Nasir, asking him to exercise his constitutional power to grant reduced sentences. The carrying out of the death sentence was a shock to Ben Gurion, who had ordered the sabotage operation. Therefore, the first thing he did when he returned to the Defense Ministry was to issue orders to undertake the infamous and barbarous raid against Gaza in February 1955 in retaliation for the execution of the Israeli saboteurs and to cover up the Israeli subversive conspiracy uncovered by Egyptian security authorities, to demonstrate Egypt's military weakness in order to persuade America to side with Israel and give up its rapprochement with Egypt, and to influence psychologically the Egyptian domestic front. This raid claimed the lives of 40 Egyptian soldiers. Prime Minister Moshe Sharet, who had failed to strain Ben Gurion and his military extremists, soon resigned in desperation and disgust.

Israel Fishes in Troubled Waters

This raid was the direct pretext which prompted 'Abd-al-Nasir to summon the American ambassador to Cairo, Henry Byrode, to inform him that "if the United States does not sell Egypt the weapons it needs to defend its national security, I will ask the Soviet Union for arms." Thus, Israel got its wish to sabotage the possibilities of an Egyptian-American rapprochement. Binhasi Lavon's trial in 1960 confirmed Israel's responsibility for this subversive conspiracy known as the "Lavon operation" when Lavon accused the chief of intelligence of mismanaging the espionage and sabotage episode in Egypt, an operation undertaken by Israeli intelligence without the authority of the competent minister, Defense Minister Lavon. A comparison between the outcome of the Lavon scandal in 1954 and the interception of the Egyptian airliner by American F-15 fighters reveals that the objective is the same and the result similar: the deterioration of Egyptian-American relations, an outcome which of course is not in favor of either of the two countries. The unquestioned winner in the poisoning of Egyptian-American relations is Israel. In the Lavon scandal, it was Israel who had disturbed American-Egyptian relations and the one who caught the fish as well. As for the "Achille Lauro" incident, the United States, by its totally unacceptable behavior, has disturbed its growing relations with Egypt, but Israel is the one who is catching the fish, something which the American administration cannot justify, for Israel is the one who caught the fish in both cases.

We are confident that judicious and quiet Egyptian diplomacy in dealing with the situation will generate the kind of Egyptian reactions which can realize the national interests of the Egyptian people and safeguard their dignity while foiling the designs of those who always fish in troubled waters.

Perhaps this is an opportune time to ask former Prime Minister Mamduh Salim to bear witness to the Lavon scandal for posterity's sake. Mamduh Salim was one of the young general investigative officers in Alexandria who uncovered the Israeli terrorist subversive conspiracy.

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EGYPT

LEADER OF MALTA RESCUE OPERATION INTERVIEWED

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 4-10 Dec 85 pp 15-17

[Interview with Lieutenant General Muhammad Kamal 'Atiyyah by Mahmud Sadiq in Cairo: "Special Strike Force Leader Talks About Storming of Egyptian Airliner: Our Operation Was Fully Successful; We Were Not the Cause of High Number of Casualties"; date not specified]

[Text] AL-MAJALLAH met with the leader of the special strike force, Lt Gen Muhammad Kamal 'Atiyyah, the man who planned and carried out the operation. This is the first interview of its kind in the world press which answered the questions that were on everyone's mind. How was the operation carried out and why did so many lose their lives? Was it true that commando bullets were the cause of such a high number of casualties? The following is the text of the interview:

[Question] When did you find out that you had to storm a hijacked airliner?

[Answer] I reviewed the assignment from the Armed Forces General Command at about 1 am on Sunday morning, 24 November, whereupon the specially trained troops, about 30 men, were instructed about this mission. We took off in military airplanes at dawn Sunday and arrived at our destination around 10 am.

Upon our arrival I met with Maltese government officials who had formed a working team headed by the prime minister who brought me up to date on developments from the time we left Cairo until we landed at Valetta Airport. Thereafter I gathered the troops in a safe place far from the plane out of sight of airport employees and scouted the location of the airplane from more than one position. In the meantime, they had thrown one body out of the plane, refusing to let it be pulled away and threatening to kill anyone who tried to approach the area.

After that, the troop leader and I went to the public hospital in Malta where we met with two flight attendants who had been thrown out of the airplane. We obtained information which confirmed what the Maltese prime minister had said about the hijackers dispositions, makeup, and frame of mind. They said that the hijacking started as soon as the plane took off from Athens airport when food was being served. One hijacker had pulled the pin out of a grenade and pulled out his gun. There were about three or four of them. They tied the passengers to their seats with neckties and other things they found in the plane. We then talked to security officer Midhat Mustafa, who had 18 bullet wounds but managed to stay alive, who confirmed what the flight attendants had said. All this information made us realize that we were up against a hijacker for blood without any purpose or cause.

[Question] Prior to the storming operation, you had to know the hijackers' state of mind and psychological condition. What information did you have before you set out on your mission?

[Answer] The information we had confirmed that we were up against a bunch of hysterical, psychopathic professional killers bent on killing the passengers. This was made clear when one hijacker killed his victims and threw them out of the airplane while refusing to let us pull them out to administer medical treatment. We were sure that they were highly trained in this kind of operation and that they had no specific cause or goal.

Another thing I would like to mention is that the hijackers did not want to talk or negotiate in order to bring their points of view closer together. Hence, we had no idea of what they were thinking or planning.

[Question] What happened after you obtained this information?

[Answer] The hijackers asked for food and we tried to get a dialogue with them going in order to ascertain what was happening with the passengers, but they refused to answer just as they refused to release the children. Their replies were terse and therefore useless in shedding any light on what was happening. When the food was being delivered, we wanted to photograph the way they operated and how they were going to receive the food in order to form an idea of their situation, but they used the passengers to receive the food, keeping themselves out of sight. This showed their good training in such circumstances. All the photos that were taken of them were studied in planning the storming operation.

[Question] What final conclusion did this information provide?

[Answer] That the hijackers were bent on murder. This was made plain from the start for they had picked out their victims by turn, killing one every 15 minutes. Add to that their disturbed state and inhumanity in dealing with the passengers and their refusal to allow the bodies to be removed.

Decision to Storm

[Question] How was the decision to storm the plane taken?

[Answer] Upon discussing the best way to storm the airplane, we reached a unanimous decision to use more than one tactic in order to ensure that they would not escape punishment, which must be a deterrent to any hijacker, because terrorism must be condemned in the strongest terms and at the location so that others will not repeat such acts in the future.

I assure you that the idea was to use more than one location in order to get to the hijackers as fast as possible. Of course, we got close to the plane's belly, side doors, and the main doors, a technique in which we are highly experienced. All the members of the attack unit are highly trained men because we consider the first shot as the last one and therefore it must be fatal so that the hijackers will not have a chance to return fire.

[Question] Did you use any kind of camouflage to cover your plans to storm the airplane?

[Answer] Of course. We were anxious to maintain the situation around the airplane as it was the night before in order not to arouse their suspicion. We maintained complete silence while stepping up our dialogue with them so as not to give them any clues about our intent to storm the airplane. The hijackers, meanwhile, asked for water and this was our opportunity to keep up the dialogue. This was a few moments before the operation.

Timing of the Assault

[Question] How was the timing of the assault set and who made the final decision?

[Answer] The timing was set when all the necessary information had been gathered, thus giving the rescuers a clear picture of the situation from the standpoint of its suitability for such an action with regard to isolating the airplane from the airport and the very dim lights inside the plane, in addition to constant confusion and the dialogue between us concerning their request for water. All this was aimed at creating an appropriate climate for storming the airplane.

[Question] How was the storming carried out?

[Answer] At the beginning of the operation we took our position without the hijackers noticing our movements. Meanwhile the pilot was sending us the useful signals when he mentioned that the hijackers had locked the main doors from inside, but that the wing doors were ready for outside assistance. This helped us greatly because it meant that the side doors had no seats or other obstacles behind them and therefore it would be easy for the attack unit to get inside the airplane through these doors.

[Question] When the operation got underway, did the hijackers notice any movement that might have aroused their suspicions that a storming operation was imminent?

[Answer] No, because we had kept up our dialogue with them concerning their request for water in order to distract them. The assault took place from the plane's belly in an attempt to draw the hijackers to that area of the airplane while other members of the unit entered the airplane from the side doors. The plan can be summarized as follows: from the standpoint of slipping into the airplane, cut off the freight door, storm the wing door, and then enter through the main door. The operation was fully successful and went according to plan. The troops entered the plane where they found one of the hijackers, whom they shot. In the back of the airplane was another hijacker. Grenades were set off and the surprise was that they were incendiary phosphorous grenades which are banned worldwide. They are highly combustible because they can set fire to anything: metal, carpets, seats.

[Question] When you stormed the airplane, did you not imagine that they might have had grenades, in view of their repeated threats to blow up the plane, grenades that might be banned internationally?

[Answer] No one, even terrorists, expected that. We thought it was a highly explosive grenade capable of causing very limited damage through shrapnel and superficial injuries.

[Question] Why were the passengers not rescued quickly when the plane was set afire by phosphorous grenades?

[Answer] We were able to evacuate about 26 passengers through the main and side doors. Some passengers were jumping out of the plane in panic. Meanwhile, we had asked for fire engines and the Maltese authorities did not hesitate to offer all the help they could, but the equipment was not modern enough to do the job because water cannot extinguish fires caused by phosphorous grenades. They were able, however, to contain the front part of the airplane and the fire was concentrated in the rear where most of the passengers were gathered.

[Question] In setting the final time for the operation, did you contact the operations room in Cairo or did you have absolute freedom to set it as you saw fit?

[Answer] We maintained constant contact with the command, which was kept abreast of developments. The field commander, however, has the authority to choose the appropriate time and the method to be used and to employ all developments to the benefit of the operation.

[Question] Did the command know of your decision to storm the airplane at 8:15 Malta time?

[Answer] It was kept abreast of developments, but we did not want to transmit radio messages for fear of interception.

[Question] How long did the rescue operation last?

[Answer] No more than 2 minutes plus 5 to 6 minutes to evacuate the passengers when the fire in the plane had intensified because phosphorous grenades are highly inflammable and they give out an asphyxiating odor produced by the melting metal. All this notwithstanding, the men kept up their evacuation and rescue efforts.

[Question] You mentioned that the hijackers were taken care of within 2 minutes. Were the grenades set off subsequent to that?

[Answer] No, during that time. When one of them was shot, the grenade dropped out of his hand. The grenade had been detonated because he knew he was going to die and wanted to blow up the airplane instantly.

[Question] Didn't the pilot mention that the hijackers had grenades ready to go off and that they were phosphorous?

[Answer] No, all he said was that the main doors had been locked from inside and gave some information about the hijackers' movements inside the airplane, which enabled us to approximate their positions.

[Question] It was said that the high number of casualties was caused by the bullets of the Egyptian commandos?

[Answer] Let us wait for the autopsy reports. I assure you that the hijackers were known and that the passengers were strapped in to their seats, so how could we not have recognized them right away? I assert that the attack unit did not cause any casualties.

Furthermore, we only use handguns in our assaults and no more than five rounds for each one. No more than 6 individuals stormed the plane, which means they carried 30 rounds among them. No grenades or explosives were used because the operation did not call for these kind of weapons. It was a matter of storming and firing one bullet because such is the training of the unit's personnel who are capable of hitting the target with the first shot. We do not need to use rifles, explosives, or even defensive grenades.

[Question] How many rounds did the members of the attack unit take back with them?

[Answer] We first only about seven shots.

[Question] Was there an alternate plan to storming the airplane?

[Answer] The attack had to be done. As for the method used, it was 100 percent successful scientifically, technically, and in its execution. Our problem was that we were up against an immoral and inhuman hijacker who was using an internationally banned incendiary substance. This is a criminal act which caused most of the casualties. Thank God we were able to save 41 passengers, thus preventing a greater disaster.

Six Mistakes

[Question] The Bonn government advisor on terrorism mentioned that at least six mistakes were committed during the storming operation, including mass media reports about the preparations for a storming operation; the fact that the hijackers saw the troops approaching the airplane; the failure to prepare psychologically through skillful negotiations with the hijackers; and the fact that the unit members did not know who the hijackers or passengers were and did not have information concerning the plane and how to enter it, in addition to their failure to use concussion bombs so as to overwhelm the hijackers.

[Answer] All the above allegations have an answer because every operation in the world has its own circumstances from the standpoint of planning, preparation, and implementation at the proper time. Moreover, the results were 100 percent successful.

As for saying that the storming operation was made public, I reaffirm that the hijackers did not know about it and they were expecting to get the water they requested.

Concerning the allegation that we were not familiar with the plane's layout, an airplane similar to the hijacked one was examined prior to the operation and the doors were opened after technical measures, which need not be mentioned here, were adopted to get to the plane's door. Furthermore, our men are trained on these kinds of airplanes.

[Question] Regarding the claim of not knowing the hijackers, it was said that the commandos did not know who the hijackers were and who the passengers were.

[Answer] The hijacker is always the one with a mask on his face and the one standing up and carrying arms, while the victim is sitting down. This is all I need to know. I reaffirm that we do not use any kind of grenades because our men are trained to hit the target with the first shot.

[Question] Could the operation have been carried out with fewer casualties?

[Answer] The casualties were the result of using the internationally banned incendiary phosphorous grenades which caused a number of fires, smoke and asphyxiation. Had these bombs not been used, there would not have been any victims.

[Question] How do you reply to what was said following the storming operation?

[Answer] I say that Egypt is always a pioneer in adopting effective and bold crucial decisions in condemning terrorism, not only in word but also in deed by striking against it wherever it may be.

[Question] And what is your answer to the foreign broadcasts that say that the attack should never have happened?

[Answer] We will not be intimidated by terrorism and will resist it wherever it may be by whatever means possible.

[Question] Even at the risk of causing casualties?

[Answer] Even at the risk of causing casualties. We cannot achieve security without casualties. I emphasize that the storming operation was 100 percent successful and the casualties were not killed by the attack unit's bullets.

12502/13167
CSO: 4504/114

EGYPT

BRIEFS

MONITORING POLITICAL REFUGEES--The Egyptian Interior Ministry is considering forming a special security apparatus to follow the activities of political refugees, and to ensure that they do not carry out hostile activities against their governments. Party sources in Cairo say that the Egyptian security agencies decided to strengthen the monitoring of political refugees in Egypt after Cairo received letters from Arab and African governments expressing displeasure that political refugees (deportees or fugitives from these countries) are engaging in political activities hostile to their governments, including planning coup attempts. [Text] [London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 9 Dec 85 p 3] /8309

CSO: 4504/123

JOINT COMMUNIQUE WITH POLAND PUBLISHED

PM111601 Tunis L'ACTION in French 7 Dec 85 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Joint Tunisian-Polish Communique; Need to Continue Bilateral Cooperation and Expand It in All Fields"]

[Text] Here is the text of the joint communique published at the end of the visit paid to Tunisia 4 to 5 December by General Jaruzelski, chairman of the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic:

At the invitation of His Excellency Mr Habib Bourguiba, president of the Republic of Tunisia, His Excellency Mr Wojciech Jaruzelski, chairman of the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, paid an official visit to Tunisia 4 to 5 December.

During his visit, the chairman of the Council of State and President Bourguiba had in-depth talks about the current state and development prospects of Tunisian-Polish relations. The two heads of state also exchanged views on international problems. The meeting took place in an atmosphere of understanding and warm cordiality reflecting the nature of the traditional friendly ties which exist between the Tunisian and Polish peoples.

A working session took place between the two delegations chaired by His Excellency Mr Jaruzelski and His Excellency Mr Mohamed Mzali, the prime minister.

The following took part in the talks on the Tunisian side:

- Mr Mansour Skhiri, minister and director of the President's Office;

- Mr Beji Caid Essebsi, foreign minister;

- Mr Hedi Baccouche, minister, minister attached to the prime minister and director of the party;

- Mr Rachid Sfar, minister of the national economy;

- Mr Mezir Chekir, minister attached to the prime minister for the Civil Service and Administrative Reform;

- Mr Ismail Khelil, plan minister;

- Mr Abderrazak Kefi, minister of information;

- Mr Hamed Ammar, general director of international cooperation;

- Mr Taoufik Smida, direcotr of political affairs for Europe;

- Mr Hedi Mokaddem, ambassador to Warsaw;

- Mr Ali Tekaya, director of bilateral and regional cooperation;

- Mr Hosni Toumi, director of cooperation at the Ministry of National Economy;

- Mr Abdelaziz Kacem, general director of Tunisian radio and television;

- Mr Ali Hedda, chairman of API [expansion unknown].

And on the Polish side:

- Mr Jozef Czyrek, member of the Polish United Workers Party [PZPR] Central Committee Bureau and secretary of the PZPR Central Committee and chairman of the Sejm Commission for foreign affairs;

- Mr Wladyslaw Gwiazda, deputy prime minister;

- Mr Zygmunt Surowiec, secretary of the Council of State;

- Mr Michael Janiszewski, chief of the office of the Council of Ministers;

- Mr Stanislaw Gebala, minister of labor, wages, and social affairs;

- Mr Boguslaw Kolodziejczak, director of the PZPR Central Committee Secretariat Chancery;

- Mr Jerzy Breitkopf, director of the Chancellery of the Council of State;

- Mr Jan Majewski, deputy foreign minister;

- Mr Mieczyslaw Majewski, Polish ambassador to Tunisia.

Surveying questions of common interest, the two sides noted their profound approval of the positive development of bilateral relations which have developed on the basis of the principles of mutual respect, independence, and noninterference in internal affairs, and mutually advantageous cooperation.

They noted their desire to continue political dialogue at all levels and to develop to this end contacts, meetings, and visit exchanges between officials of the two countries.

Noting also that Tunisian-Polish cooperation is developing satisfactorily in the scientific, technical, and cultural fields, the two sides advocated expanding it and agreed on the expediency of continuing this useful and fruitful cooperation and extending it to other fields.

The two sides mentioned in particular the paths and means of increasing and stabilzing exchanges and the opportunities for investment and industrial and technical cooperation. In this field they agreed to expand existing commercial channels and to work to develop them and to diversify the products exchanged within the framework of the overall equilibrium of the balance of trade.

The two sides agreed to convene the joint economic commission before the end of January 1986 with a view in particular to concluding a protocol on trade agreement for a period of 5 years, as of January 1986.

Going on to exchange views of the present world situation, the two sides expressed their profound anxiety at the deterioration of this situation and their common conviction that the frenzied arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, presents a grave threat to peace and international security.

The two sides stressed in this respect the need for the international community to pool its efforts to put an end to the arms race, to eliminate seats of tension, and to work to safeguard and consolidate detente and security.

Noting with satisfaction the recent Soviet-U.S. summit meeting in Geneva, the two sides expressed the hope that it will have positive influence on the future development of the international situation and that it will contribute to the strengthening of security and peace.

The two delegations paid great attention to the Middle East conflict. In this respect they believe that the escalation of violence and the explosive situation prevailing in this region are a grave threat to peace in the region and throughout the world, and they vigorously denounced Israel's polciy of aggression and expansion.

They mentioned the need for Israel to withdraw immediately from all occupied Arab territories and for the implementation of the inalienable national rights of the people of Palestine, which should acquire specific form in the creation of an independent and sovereign state. They reaffirmed their support for the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

The two sides also appealed for an end to the internal fratricidal fighting in Lebanon and proclaimed their adherence to the country's unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

They expressed their anxiety at the continuation of the murderous conflict between Iraq and Iran and they advocated the ending of hostilities and a search for a solution through peaceful negotiations.

Special attention was also paid to the situation in Africa, especially in southern Africa, where the Pretoria racist minority regime has been flouting with impunity the most elementary rules of freedom and dignity. They expressed their solidarity and support for the indigenous peoples in their struggle for liberation and freedom. The two sides also branded the Pretoria regime's actions aimed at destabilizing neighboring countries and in particular its many maneuvers designed to delay the inevitable independence of Namibia.

Reviewing the current state of international economic relations, they advocated the establishment of a new economic order based on the principles of equal rights and the equilibrium of mutual advantage.

The two sides stressed the growing importance of the Nonaligned Movement as a positive force in the struggle to preserve peace, to halt the arms race, to develop international cooperation, and to support the peoples struggling for liberation.

Mentioning the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations, the two sides reaffirmed their complete adherence to the principles in the Charter and stressed the importance of the part played by this organization in maintaining peace and establishing international cooperation beneficial to all.

The two delegations expressed their full satisfaction with the course of the visit and the result of the positive and encouraging talks on most of the subjects mentioned. They also emphasized that the visit of His Excellency Mr Wojciech Jaruzelski, chairman of the Council of State, is an important contribution to closer friendly relations between Poland and Tunisia and the development of mutually advantageous cooperation.

Mr Wojciech Jaruzelski, chairman of the Polish Council of State, expressed heartfelt thanks for the hospitality shown him and the Polish delegation. He invited President Mr Habib Bourguiba and Tunisian Prime Minister Mr Mohamed Mzali to pay official visits to Poland. The invitations were accepted with pleasure.

/12640
CSO: 4500/49

TUNISIA

NEW MINISTRY'S POSSIBLE EFFECT ON SOCIAL POLICY VIEWED

Tunis AL-ANWAR AL-TUNISIYAH in Arabic 24 Nov 85 p 4

[Commentary by Faysal al-Ba'tut: "For a Just Social Policy: Three New Funds?"]

[Text] Immediately after President Bourguiba's decree establishing a Ministry of Social Welfare, discussion became more earnest concerning the changes that our country will be experiencing in the future in the area of social coverage.

There is no doubt that Ridha Hamza who was appointed to the head of this young ministry is dedicated, more than at any previous time, to the realization of these reforms at the earliest possible date and that he is personally eager for the new ministry's machinery to function well.

What was frequently mentioned in the past and is repeated these days is the talk of the consolidation of the social security funds (the National Retirement Fund, Social Welfare Fund, the Social Security Fund, and the Old-Age Insurance Fund). However, it is most likely, and this is not yet confirmed, that the funds' organizations are what will be consolidated, or at least brought closer together.

The first step taken in this direction may be the replacement of the current social funds by three new ones, each one specializing in a particular domain.

In this respect, the following funds may be created: a first fund which is concerned with health insurance and which includes all employees, whether they belong to the private or the public sector; then, a second fund whose functions would be concerned with pensions (of retirees, widows, and others) would also include both the private and public sectors; and there is the third fund--and it has the most potential--which may be created to take care of real estate affairs and loans and to which the designation of "bank" might be applied.

While freedom of action has been left to the funds whose creation has been decided on, they will all be subject to a central administration which is responsible for coordination among all of them and for providing for the infrastructure of these public funds with a budget, communications, public relations, and other things. If this is done, the social welfare system of our country and its counterpart in France will be very similar.

If indeed some believe that the above-mentioned may be needless repetition, then the closeness or the remoteness of the date of its promulgation would hardly be news to anyone. That is to say there are numerous factors particularly the project study, which may take a long time. This is logical considering the intense efforts and persistent work required to procure legal texts that will comply with the spirit of this change.

Likewise, it seems that the most logical and likely thing is the consolidation of the social welfare system, which will inevitably be followed by the consolidation of the funds, especially since the current distinctions are numerous and varied. Among them, for example, is the retirement system in which the Retirement Fund uses as a basis the number of years worked by the public sector employees. What the Societ Security Fund uses as a basis for the same renumeration is the point method. We see the same difference between the two current funds, in health insurance and the rates of participation by the members.

For these reasons, opinion may currently be directed toward overcoming these differences and looking into the possibility of drawing up legal texts which consolidate the various social services or bring them closer together so that we may guarantee both a fair and useful social policy.

/8309
CSO: 4504/125

TUNISIA

RESOLUTIONS OF LOCAL UGTT BRANCHES REPORTED

Tunis LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE in French 2 Nov 85 p 7

[Text] The base-level unions belonging to the UGTT [Tunisian General Federation of Labor] are continuing to meet locally and regionally to denounce the distortion of authentic trade union action and to proclaim the establishment of provisional committees to prepare for the National Congress, while demanding, among other things, that accounts be rendered concerning the poor administration of the workers' funds.

Zaghouan

The base-level unions, which met at the headquarters of the regional union of Zaghouan on Thursday morning announced the dissolution of the regional bureau of the UGTT and the creation of a provisional committee with a view to the holding of a special congress of the regional union to represent the region at the next congress at the national level, and to put trade union action back on the proper path.

After studying the situation, the participants approved the following motion:

"The base-level unions belonging to the UGTT, meeting at the headquarters of the union in Zaghouan to study the deterioration of the organization, after examining the status of the union and in particular the improper activities of the union leadership, the mismanagement of the funds of the working class and hostile attitude of the union leaders toward the regime,

--proclaim their endorsement of the organization, under the sponsorship of the regime and national unity;

--withdraw their confidence from the executive bureau of the Zaghouan Regional Union and announce its dissolution;

--designate a provisional committee to make the necessary preparations for the holding of a special congress;

--call upon the officials responsible for the union finances to present a statement of account; and

--pledge themselves to work for the interests of the country and the preservation of the legitimate rights of the workers within the framework of the laws in effect."

Jendouba

Following the reactivation of trade union life by the union members in the enterprises and production sectors of the governorate of Jendouba, the members, meeting in the seat of the governorate, drafted telegrams to protest the poor management of UGTT funds and to demand that this union be purged of those engaged in sabotage.

Within this context, a meeting was held, attended by officials:

--from the base unions in the primary and secondary teaching, forestry and craft production sectors in Ain Draham;

--from the base-level unions in primary education, the SONEDE [National Water Exploitation and Distribution Company], and the brickmaking, farming, supervisory and construction sectors in Zendouba;

--from the base-level unions in the farm complex sector in Badrouna (Bou-Salem);

--from the Regional Transportation Union;

--from the Construction and Education Workers' Union sections in Jendouba.

In the telegrams they sent to the pertinent authorities on this occasion, the participants demanded, among other things:

--the holding of a special UGTT congress;

--the exclusion from this union of adventurers and the officials charged with abuse of authority, and those guilty of the bad management of the funds of the workers' class, headed by the secretary general; and

--the correction of trade union actions so that the UGTT can remain in the vanguard of the nationalist and trade union battle.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants established a provisional committee entrusted with seeing to the interests of the workers and making preparations for a special regional congress within the next 3 months. The committee is made up of the members of the present executive bureau and trade union members who have assumed responsibilities within the UGTT since its establishment.

Le Kef

The true trade unionists met yesterday morning at the headquarters of the Regional Labor Union of Le Kef, where weapons including clubs, iron bars and stones were found.

After studying the situation, the trade union members published a motion in which they stated that, because of the deterioration in the trade union situation caused by the deviation from the path traced by the great Hached on the part of certain trade union leaders, headed by Habib Achour:

--they proclaim the dissolution of the Regional Labor Bureau in Le Kef and the establishment of a provisional bureau which will see to union affairs and the preparations for the special UGTT congress;

--they demand an accounting of the UGTT leaders concerning the financial management of the trade union and its assets;

--they demand that those responsible for the deviation in trade union action and the misuse of UGC funds be penalized;

--they condemn the ignoble intervention of the Libyan regime in the domestic affairs of Tunisia, and they denounce the complicity of Achour's acolytes with the Libyan regime;

--they assert their devotion to the principles of Bourguiba governing authentic trade union action;

--they state that they are mobilized to combat all those who might be tempted to threaten the gains made by the workers under the leadership of the Supreme Combatant and his wise government, headed by Mohamed Mzali.

In addition, dedicated to the principles established by the late Farhat Hached, and aware of the seriousness of the present situation of the UGTT, which is being used by some of its leaders for purposes entirely contrary to the ethic of free workers, Mohamed Lamine Ben Sadok, secretary general of the base-level union at the Kalaa Khasba mine, and Mohamed Hedi Errejhi, secretary general of the base-level union of workers at the Ministry of Interior in Le Kef, sent two messages to the governor of the region, in which they announced their resignation from the UGTT.

Tozeur

The base-level unions in the governorate of Tozeur, meeting yesterday morning at the headquarters of the regional labor union, announced approval of the following motion:

"Aware of the serious nature of the immoral practices of Habib Achour and his gang, who have violated the most basic principles of trade union action and have profited from their trade union posts to abuse the finances of the union, and to make of it a tool of pressure, the authentic trade union cadres of Tozeur:

1) Have decided to dissolve the regional executive bureau in the governorate of Tozeur because of its bad management of the funds of the regional union and their use for personal purposes and with a view to winning supporters, and we demand court trial for all its members.

2) Are announcing the establishment of a provisional bureau to manage the workers' affairs in the region, pending the holding of a congress at a date to be established later.

3) Consider the executive bureau of the UGTT to be absolutely nonrepresentative, and demand the convocation of a special UGTT congress to demand an accounting of the members of the executive bureau as to their deviations from the noble trade union goals as defined by the late Farhat Hached, as well as their mismanagement of UGTT funds.

4) Denounce the crimes committed by Achour and his gang against the working classes, and in particular their use of the trade union for purposes absolutely contrary to patriotic and authentic trade union action.

5) Reaffirm to the Supreme Combatant, the builder of the glory of Tunisia, their undying devotion to his person and their faith in national unity.

6) Support the action of the government under the leadership of Mohamed Mzali, designed to promote the integral development of Tunisia and to guarantee further prosperity and stability for the country.

Long live the Supreme Combatant!

Long live Tunisia and the Tunisian General Federation of Labor!"

Hammamet

At the conclusion of a meeting held on 30 October at the headquarters of the Hammamet Regional Union to study the general trade union situation, to adopt a clear position with a view to safeguarding the interests of the members of the UGTT, and to establish the foundations for responsible and patriotic trade union action, the trade union cadres in Hammamet published a motion in which:

1) They decided to withdraw their confidence from the current leadership of the UGTT, which they no longer regard as representative.

2) They insistently demand the convocation of a special congress of the UGTT as soon as possible.

3) They require that an accounting be demanded of all those who have abused the finances of the union and used them for purposes other than those of the trade unions, and that court proceedings be filed against them.

4) They announce the dissolution of the Hammamet regional bureau and the creation of a provisional committee to make preparations for the regional union congress, its members including Sadok Kasdaghli, Tahar Zouhir, Mouldi Abid Sassi, Kamel Attia, Moncef Turki, Mohamed Hechmi Toumi, and Salah Tayar.

5) They reassert their undying devotion to the Supreme Combatant, President Habib Bourguiba and his government, headed by Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Mohamed Mzali.

Enfidha

The members of the regional labor union in Enfidha affiliated with the UGTT have made public the following motion:

"We, the trade union cadres of Enfidha, convince the leaders in the noble trade union principles defined by the late Farhat Hached, the founder of the union and martyr of the liberation struggle, and

Aware of the seriousness of our responsibilities, which dictate that we safeguard the patriotic line and the prestige of our organization,

Having reviewed the deterioration on the national and regional levels, characterized by:

1) The immoral and unpatriotic practices utilized daily by the executive bureau members in Achour's gang;

2) The serious violations of the internal relations of the UGTT for which they are responsible, as well as the use of individual positions and maneuvers designed to lead the base levels of the trade union into error, and the misuse and diversion of union funds for unworthy purposes; and

3) The obstacles created by the secretary general to the free exercise of trade union rights within the organization, and the use of the causes of the workers for purposes of political bargaining:

Express their regret at the negligence, because of this state of affairs, of the interests of the working classes, which have been sacrificed in the wake of serious excesses, maneuvers to divide trade union ranks, and partisan struggles going against the noble trade union principles set forth by the late Farhat Hached.

For these reasons, the trade union cadres of Enfidha:

1) Have decided to dissolve the regional bureau in Enfidha affiliated with the UGTT, stating to the public of the nations that it is no longer representative of the working strata in the organization;

2) Announce the establishment of a provisional committee to manage the affairs of the workers and prepare for the congress.

3) Declare their determination to challenge anyone who might try to abort this spontaneous action, and warn any individual who would venture to doubt the sincerity and the devotion of the trade union cadres of Enfidha who are signatories of this motion.

4) Reassert their devotion to national unity and to the gains of the Bourguiba regime, while pledging themselves to put the national interests above all other considerations."

The provisional bureau of the regional labor union in Enfidha has the following members:

Sadok Kadissa, trade union militant since the establishment of the UGTT in 1946;

Farouk Annaoui, trade union representative since 1970;

Mohamed Ben Hassine, of the municipality of Enfidha, trade union representative since 1962;

Jilani Ben Tahar Lahdhili, of the Enfidha Transportation Workers Union, a representative since 1971;

Salah Lahmar, of the Farm Complex Union, a representative since 1962.

Siliana

The trade union officials of Siliana have made public a motion stating the following, among other things:

"Following an initiative on the part of the expanded trade union base, and representing the overwhelming majority of the officials within the union bodies affiliated with the UGTT, through a motion published on 23 October 1985 bearing 181 signatures and demanding the holding of a special union congress;

Following the spontaneous initiatives of the local bodies in the delegations calling for the dissolution of the local unions and the establishment of provisional committees entrusted with provisional management of trade union actions; and

In view of the announcement by these structures of the withdrawal of their confidence from the regional bureau of the UGTT in Siliana, as well as from Habib Achour, Abdesselem Jerad and their henchmen;

We, the regional and local trade union officials and officials of the base-level unions in the various regions of the governorate of Siliana affiliated with the UGTT, meeting on 30 October 1985 at the headquarters of the regional labor union in Siliana, after having analyzed in depth the trade union situation which has deteriorated because of the irresponsible behavior of certain leaders of the organization and the violence done to the internal regulations of the union, causing harm to trade union activity and imposing their own decisions while showing contempt for the opinion of the base level,

Believing that the interests of the workers have been neglected because of the attitude of this leadership, which is more concerned with advancing its personal designs,

We:

1) Condemn the positions of Habib Achour, Abdesselem Jerad and their henchmen because of the actions they have undertaken to exclude the true trade unionist and because they have misappropriated the funds of the workers;

2) Demand that an investigation of the bad management of the bodies and enterprises affiliated with the UGTT be undertaken;

3) Demand that court proceedings be initiated against those who are guilty of bad management in the enterprises affiliated with the UGTT, and who have misappropriated the workers' funds to their own profit;

4) Legitimately take possession of the headquarters of the regional union in Siliana and all its contents, since we represent the overwhelming majority of the trade union bodies in the region;

5) Dissolve the regional bureau of the UGTT and its administrative committee, withdrawing our confidence from them;

6) Demand the holding of a special UGTT congress as soon as possible, in order to reestablish solid and healthy foundations for trade union action and to put the organization back on the right path;

7) Warn all of those seeking to do harm to the authentic trade unions in the region, to cast doubt on their integrity or to hinder their actions;

8) Express our devotion to the preservation of national unity and the gains made for the workers and the country under the Bourguiba regime, and place the higher interests of the country above all other considerations;

9) Proclaim our undenying devotion to the Supreme Combatant, President Habib Bourguiba, the founder of modern Tunisia and builder of its glory and invulnerability, as well as our total support of the militant government headed by Mohamed Mzali;

10) Undertake the establishment of a provisional committee for the regional bureau in Siliana affiliated with the UGTT, to manage the affairs of the organization and see to the workers' interests."

Sfax

A trade union meeting attended by more than 2,000 workers and union cadres from various economic enterprises in the governorate of Sfax was held yesterday afternoon at the Sfax House of Youth.

In his address, Mohamed Ayoub, president of the provisional committee of the URT in Sfax, thanked those present for their enthusiasm. He then added that the members of the legal administrative commission of the regional union had convoked the meeting and the attendance of trade union cadres to establish the foundations for healthy trade union action and to work within the framework of the UGTT, for which Farhat Hached sacrificed his life, and in accordance with the Bourguiba path.

He recommended that the base-level unions function in full and militant independence, and that they oppose all the sabotage efforts and all of the factions hostile to the workers' organization.

"We are members of a single body," he said, "whether we be intellectual or manual workers. As workers and as an administrative commission, we are saddened by the deviations and the irresponsible actions committed on the trade union level in the region. I must therefore be on guard against such actions, and I urge you to be serious and to apply democracy within the organization, under the guidance of our great leader, President Habib Bourguiba."

Mohamed Ayoub then read the following motion, which was approved at the conclusion of the meeting:

"We, the members of the legal administrative commission of the Regional Labor union in the governorate of Sfax,

Motivated by the principles of authentic trade union established by the great Farhat Hached, and conscious of the weight of the responsibility which falls to us, the trade union cadres responsible for seeing that the workers' organization remains patriotic, powerful and respected,

After having established the presence of various weapons in the union premises, reflecting serious violations of the internal regulations of the organization, apart from the exclusion of trade union action and the practices of certain anarchic trade unionists within the ranks of the workers,

And after having learned of the violations of the internal regulations of the union, violations of its statutes by certain union leaders, and the adoption by these same leaders of unwise and individual decisions, the deception of the base-level unions, the misappropriation of the assets of the organization and their use for personal purposes, the introduction of provocative elements urging extremist ideologies and mercenaries following antipatriotic orders, for purposes serving only their own interests, the exclusion of the authentic trade unionists devoted to the principles established by Hached, the elimination of freedom of trade union action within the organization, and the desire to divide the trade union ranks and alienate trade union causes,

Faced with this shameful and irresponsible behavior, express our sadness at the neglect of the interests of the workers' class and their exclusion, in the midst of antidemocratic struggles far removed from the trade union principles of Farhat Hached.

In addition, we proclaim:

The establishment of a provisional committee entrusted with seeing to the interests of the trade unions and the preparations for a democratic regional congress;

That recognition of the national commission is withdrawn, and that a special UGTT Congress should be held as soon as possible; and

Our devotion to safeguarding national unity and the gains made by the Bourguiba regime, with our pledge to place the highest interests of the country above all other considerations.

We demand a financial investigation of the bad management of the funds of the workers' class.

We ask all free and authentic trade unionists to purge the trade union ranks of the corrupt elements, the deviationists and the defenders of anarchy and violence."

Mohamed Ayoub also announced the membership of the provisional committee entrusted with preparations for the regional union congress. The members include:

Mohamed Ayoub, president, and Ahmed Aloulou, Abdelaziz Abid, Mohamed Ghorbal, Mohamed Abdel Hedi, Mongi El Ech, Abdelaziz Kacem, Ahmed Ghorbal, Hassine Kaoui and Mohamed Bayer.

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TUNISIA

BRIEFS

POLAND'S CZYREK RECEIVED--Destourian Socialist Party Director Hedi Baccouche had a meeting at party headquarters in the Kasbah yesterday afternoon with Jozef Czyrek, member of the PZPR Politburo and chairman of the PZPR Foreign Affairs Commission. At the end of this meeting, Mr Czyrek told TAP that the positive development of relations between Tunisia and Poland requires the strengthening of cooperation between the two countries' vanguard political forces. He added that his meeting with Mr Baccouche had taken place in a friendly atmosphere and had made it possible to discuss the activities of the two parties, which, despite ideological differences, have a similar militant past in that they conducted the national liberation struggle for the independence of their respective countries. In this connection he recalled that the supreme combatant, who enjoys great respect in Poland, is the founder chairman of the PSD and that President Jaruzelski, who rendered great service in the struggle for Poland's liberation, is head of the PZPR. "This," he said, "is likely to help the two parties to strengthen their cooperation with a view to pursuing their struggle to establish peace in the world." [Unattributed report: "Heidi Baccouche Receives Chairman of PZPR Foreign Affairs Commission"] [Text] [Tunis L'ACTION in French 5 Dec 85 p 6] /12640

ECONOMIC COLLEGE CLOSURE--According to press reports published in Tunisia yesterday, the Tunisian authorities have decided to close down the economic college at Sfax until further notice. The report was published in the newspaper AL-SABAH, which failed to give the reasons that prompted the Tunisian authorities to adopt this measure. It is recalled, however, that the college recently has been the scene of student strikes and troubles in protest against the campaign waged by the government against the General Union of Tunisian Workers. [Text] [Tripoli Domestic Service in Arabic 1330 GMT 12 Dec 85] /12640

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SHARON AIDE 'ODED SHAMIR PROFILED

Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 4 Oct 85 Weekend Magazine pp 6-8, 32

[Article by Naomi Levitzky: "'Oded Shamir, 'God's Deputy'"]

[Text] After all the princes and princesses from all the fairy tales were already living happily ever after, one was still waiting for his fairy tale to be written. 'Oded Shamir, a 26 year old major in army intelligence, sat in the research department, quiet as usual, poring over papers and doing his job faithfully. That was immediately after the 1981 elections. Menahem Begin appointed Ari'el Sharon as defense minister. Sharon embarked on changing his new office. Instead of a military secretary and a military adjutant, two senior positions that had been till then manned by officers at the rank of at least lieutenant colonel, he sought to appoint a lower ranking young officer to be his personal aide, responsible to him personally. In his search for a prince whose foot would fit the new shoe, he consulted, among others, Me'ir Shamir, who was at the time the head of the Israel Land Administration. Shamir, a veteran Labor Movement activist, suggested his son, 'Oded. Sharon sent Eli Landau to check. Landau found a wise young man, agreeeable, and rather innocent. A good boy from Jerusalem, as everybody described him. Landau went back to Sharon and endorsed the young man. Sharon approved.

'Oded arrived at his new office in the Defense Ministry with typical punctuality, for the ceremonial reception of the new minister. All his new colleagues were present, as well as the prime minister, the chief-of-staff, and many senior officers. At the end of the ceremony, everyone went to the seventh floor, where rooms were ceremoniously alloted to the newcomers.

For a whole week 'Oded tiptoed through the corridors. Sharon never said one word to him. 'Oded did what he was told, and when he was not told anything--did nothing. Indirectly, he heard about a secret trip that Sharon was planning. He asked no questions and did not interfere. All of a sudden, one Saturday morning, the telephone rang at his home. On the line was Sharon. You, he told the astounded 'Oded, are the only one who is coming with me abroad. On the day they left he felt a bit like James Bond. Everything was cloaked in secrecy: small airplanes, foreign airfields, isolated and rather exotic. Landing. Strangers running to the plane. At the end of the runway another plane was waiting. Another takeoff, and again he was alone with the minister. Deep mystery.

Shamir loved every minute of it. Then came the first trip to the United States. An official visit. Brigadier General Avraham (Avrasha) Tamir taught him the rudiments of protocol and fashion.

Shamir was an industrious student. Within a few months only small mishaps and the birth pangs of the new job were a thing of the past. But at the office he continued to tiptoe and to hug the walls. Skillfully and wisely he maneuvered between old foxes like Avi Duda'i, Uri Dan, and Eli Landau. He did not bother them. Next to them, he stood out by his easy temper and refined ways. He never shouted or lost his temper, and was never seen flirting with the female soldiers. He was courteous to a fault, but did not become friendly with the other office workers. He remained cautious and secretive, but always with a ready smile on his face and equally nice to everyone. "The mask," the old ones called him behind his back. Paraphrasing Churchill, who used to say about Stalin, "He smiles, and you never know when he will open his mouth and swallow you up," people said about Oded Shamir: it is not clear whether he is a sardine or a barracuda. All anybody ever saw was a baby face.

Shamir, meanwhile, did not lose his cool. He focused all his efforts on providing personal assistance to the minister. He kept a wonderfully precise schedule, which worked like a Swiss watch; he entered items, filed intelligence reports, and followed up on the implementation of decisions. But the trait that made him begin to stand out were the long ears he grew, a trait with which he won Sharon over. He heard everything and reported it. His loyalty to the minister knew no bounds. A special sort of chemistry began to develop between the two. 'Oded Shamir began to acquire power, having secured the minister's complete trust. During the Lebanon war he was already very close to Sharon. He went with him everywhere and accompanied him to every meeting. By the time the minister's other aides became aware of the threat, it was already too late.

At Menahem Begin's office, too, the nice and modest young man was well liked, at first. "Hi, kid, what are you doing here," they used to joke with him good-humouredly. He seemed so harmless that they almost forgot he existed. Until ricochets began arriving from the defense minister. All of a sudden they realized that there was a spy among them--"Sharon's spy," as he came to be known--and began to watch him. They would spot him standing at the side and listening to other people's discussions. A classic agent, they say today, of the type that melts in the background and to whom people do not pay attention. Hears everything and reports back to the boss.

Slowly, slowly, people learned to shut their mouths in his presence. Silence descended on a room when he entered it. Even Begin, who was known for his warm attitude to young people, stopped addressing him. We were shocked, one of the people in the prime minister's office told me. We were loyal to Begin, too, but such blind loyalty? 'Oded was like a robot. He never asked questions, never said anything, only carried out orders. When he was caught eavesdropping, he would blush a little, smile in embarassement, and continue with what he was doing as if nothing happened.

Neither was he liked at the chief-of-staff's office, because of the fear that he was collecting information about them and was the source of leaks from cabinet meetings. People say that two officers at the chief-of-staff's office laid a trap for him. They waited for Shamir outside the room in which the cabinet was meeting. When they saw him come out, they followed him. They saw him go to a telephone, dial, and read out something from a note in his hand. The two officers pounced on him, tore the telephone out of his hand, and found out that he was talking to a newsman. They cut the talk and impounded the note. At the time, Amnon Abramowitz wrote a column on "'Oded the Wanderer," meaning that he would wander out of a cabinet meeting to the telephone. But 'Oded Shamir did not let that bother him. He was not even fazed. To his mind, that was part of his service to the minister. "A snitch? Nonsense. Whoever talks in my presence is obviously interested in the things reaching Sharon, otherwise he would not talk."

In the summer of 1982 'Oded was married to Semadar, a temporary EL AL hostess. About 2 weeks after the wedding, toward the high holidays, they went abroad on a honeymoon. Bashir al-Jumayyil was murdered, the IDF entered Beirut, the Phalange came to Sabra and Shatilla, and the rest is known. 'Oded Shamir was out of the country during all that time. Sharon apparently often says that had Shamir been with him, the massacre at Sabra and Shatilla would have been averted. Sharon refused to confirm or deny. In any event, in contrast to Sharon's other aides during that period, 'Oded Shamir came out without any stain in the wake of Sabra and Shatilla. He was able to provide clear-headed assistance to Sharon for his deposition to the Kahan Commission.

When Sharon was let go from the Defense Ministry, his aides were let go, too. Shamir was by then a lieutenant colonel, and the IDF did not find a job for him. For 6 months he sat at home doing nothing. He then took up sociology and political science at Bar Ilan University, until the coalition government was formed. Sharon was appointed minister of commerce and industry, and already on his first day at the office he announced to the senior staff that he intended to bring in "a clever young man whom I very much value." He was referring, of course, to 'Oded Shamir. "And since then," one of the ministry people told me, "the system acquired a very simple structure. At the Ministry of Commerce and Industry there is a God, and 'Oded is his deputy. God speaks, and his deputy passes on His words. And that is the end of that. The entire system of values is built on the equation: What does Arik think, what does Arik say, and what does Arik want."

Shamir "serves God" pleasantly and very tactfully. He is nice and quiet and derives his authority from Sharon. If he wants to achieve something, he says: "The minister wants." One never knows what the minister really wants, but one obeys. When someone wants to talk to the minister, he talks to Shamir. In the eyes of the ministry personnel Shamir fulfills the position of collective logic which is so much lacking, in their opinion, from the close environment of the minister. Shamir has also taken upon himself to mend Sharon's damaged relations with the media. This he does very correctly, and is even getting results. According to him, the young newsmen are much more receptive to Sharon than the veteran ones, who are hardened in their preconceptions. The power he amassed terrified his new colleagues, as it did at the Defense Ministry, and a balancing and deterrent campaign was launched. Thus, under the influence of ministerial aide Yisra'el Katz, who looks with anxiety upon Shamir's closeness to Sharon, his friend Shemu'el Cohen, the son of Knesset Member Cohen-Avidav, was appointed as an additional aide at the minister's office. Shamir did not like it, but he accepted the appointment.

Menanem (Mandy) Meron, director general of the Ministry of Defense, likes to say that during his work with Sharon he passed through three stages: pity, when everybody pitied him; curiosity, when everybody wanted to know how it feels to work with Sharon; and finally, amazement, when everyone was amazed to see him stand up under the pressure. 'ded Shamir has reached a fourth stage, the stage of complete identification. It is astounding, one staff member told me, what level of identification the man has developed. He has entered a sort of press and sees nothing beyond it, except for Sharon's personal grace. His identification with Sharon is not subject to any compromise. Like Woody Allen's Zelig, Shamir changes his voice and tone. The more the discussion revolves around Sharon (see box), the more similar become his voice and mode of expression to that of his boss. The hands are Jacob's hands, but the voice is Esau's voice. One of Sharon's close aides who has successfully passed the 1 year left until the rotation defined Shamir and his position as something fluid: "He holds on to the minister's views because of his close proximity to him. He does not have an ideology of his own, and once he no longer works with Sharon, he will certainly think differently. The same thing applies to Arik. His contact with people is practical and devoid of sentiments. Once he no longer needs his assistant, he will fire him."

In the meantime, like the King--or, if you prefer, the Joker--in a deck of cards, Sharon shows two faces to the world. That of Yisra'el Katz, and that, more pleasant and delicate, of 'Oded Shamir. And the two big parties are waiting in suspense to see which one will come up on top. The Likud pins its hopes on 'Oded Shamir, hoping that, with his quiet ways, he will restrain and encourage Sharon. Labor builds on Yisra'el Katz to uplift the minister's spirits and prompt him to enrage Peres once again, something that may accelerate the dismantling of the government. Labor Party figures are convinced that Katz will carry the day. In this connection, they recall La Fontaine's fable about the crab who wanted to cross a river on the back of a tortoise. No way, said the toirtoise, if I come close to you, you will sting me and I will die. Do not be afraid, said the crab, if I hurt you and you die, I would drown. The tortoise was convinced and let the crab get on his back. In the middle of the river, the crab stung the tortoise. Are you mad, whispered the tortoise, now we will both die. What can I do, replied the crab, it is the force of destiny.

[Box on page 8]

"The Press a Poison? I Would Not Put It That Way"

I met with 'Oded Shamir at a Tel Aviv coffee house. He arrived, as expected, exactly on time. A 30 year old man with a pleasant face, dark hair, thin moustache, and rather shy smile. His glasses have been replaced by contact lenses. 'Oded Shamir admits that he is placing his entire fortune on this bet. One day he will want to be the director general of some governmenet office, he does not mind which, provided it is the prime minister's office. He knows that he is dependent on, that everything depends on, Sharon: "For Arik it is not all that important to be prime minister," he says., "He likes being one of the herd." If Sharon insists on staying in the herd, Shamir will seek to make his way in private business. Perhaps the big business amid which he now moves, I suggest, would be of help to him. He does not put great hope in it. He has learned the lesson of the past. When he was the head of the defense minister's office, he says, all the general staff officers made the pilgrimage to him and sought him out. The moment he lost his position, they abandoned him. He is convinced that this scenario would be repeated with the industrialists.

In the meantime, that is how he talks:

About the Lebanon war: "Sharon is not to blame for the results. It is true that the war was problematic, but the IDF is to blame, as well as the opposition, and even Moshe Arens. Only Sharon not."

About the IDF high command meeting which gave Sharon a vote of no confidence: "Ha! Big deal. At that time they already knew in which direction the public wind was blowing. Where were they all before that? I sat in on all the meetings and never heard them talk like that. Colonel Giora Fuhrman, for example, was the head Operations Branch aide, and spoke on television against the war after his release. Where had he been before that? I never heard him speak against the war. Well, perhaps he thought he had a chance at becoming commander of the Air Force."

About the Kahan Commission: "From the beginning I had a feeling that Sharon would be fired. He did not stand a chance. There was no proportion between the things Sharon was accused of and the punishment handed down on him. All in all they said he should have predicted the results when he allowed the Phalange to enter the refugee camps. Sharon was the only one to pay a price."

About the claim that Sharon misled Begin: "Sharon did not mislead anyone. Menahem Begin knew at every moment exactly what was happening. Begin appeared on the 3rd day of the war before the Knesset and the nation and announced that as soon as they reached the 40 km line, the IDF troops would stop."

[Question] Did he know that IDF troops were at the gates of Beirut?

[Shamir] He (Begin) knew everything at all times.

At the end I asked 'Oded Shamir if he, too, thinnks that the press is a poison. He squirmed in his chair, ill at ease, perhaps for having sat so long on the hard seat. "I do not exactly recall what Sharon said," he tried to evade (and by the way, the man has an amazing memory). He finally acceded reluctantly: "I would not put it that way."

[Box on page 82]

Me'ir Shamir, 'Oded's father, immigrated from Transylvania at age 18, went straight to the Working Settlers, and immediately thereafter joined MAPAI, the Labor Party's parent. Today he is the director general of the Absorption Agency, a man with a rich and active past in the building and settlement of the country. He worked with Levy Eshkol ("I happened to pour water on his hands") and he compares his chemistry with Pinhas Sapir to the relationship between his son 'Oded and Arik Sharon. He also sees Yisra'el Galili as a teacher and mentor. In view of his long experience in land improvement and grove planting on Keren Kayemet [Jewish National Fund] lands in the Galilee, Golda M'eir appointed him as government coordinator for the Golan Heights planning and development. He came to the attention of Agriculture Minister Ari'el Sharon while in charge of the planning and implementation of project Pithat Shalom and project Mitzpim in the Galilee, after which he was appointed head of the Israeli Land Administration.

That was at the end of 1980. Sharon sought to remove the former Administration manager, Ya'aqov Aknin, having fallen out with him, but he was intent on proving that the removal was not politically motivated. When he offered the position to Me'ir Shamir, a Labor Party man, he met with opposition from the Likud. He is not one of us, the ministers said. Sharon stood his ground. After eight consultations, the apppointment was approved. 'Oded's father says that before accepting the position, he put before Sharon a list of very tough conditions and rules concerning their work together. "Sharon," Shamir confesses, "kept all of them. Had he not done so, I would have immediately resigned."

When Pesah Gruper was appointed minister of agriculture, he removed Shamir from the Administration management because of, among other things, differences concerning lands in Judaea and Samaria. Me'ir Shamir sees himself as a political dove. He is apprehensive about what is currently happening in the territories. Had it been up to him, he would have ceded land for peace.

Three sons were born to Me'ir Shamir. The oldest, Arik, was an IDF officer at the time he was killed in an exercise on the Jordan. The "Arik Bridge" at the mouth of the Jordan north of the Sea of Galilee was named after him. Arik, may he rest in peace, says the father, was 5 years older than 'Oded and was his model figure. In his footsteps, 'Oded went to the military academy next to the Real School in Haifa. But, "Arik was more open and expressed his feelings with greater ease. 'Oded is sensitive, reticent, and keeps his feelings under control."

Me'ir Shamir is somewhat worried about 'Oded's closeness to Minister Sharon: "There is no doubt that Sharon is a controversial figure and that he causes apprehension. I cannot ignore the mutual influence they have on each other. I am perhaps not objective, but I believe in and am confident of 'Oded. For me, he is a rock. I hear people say that he expresses his views without any reticence. I heard that, even during the time at the Defense Ministry, among a fairly large gathering of senior staff, 'Oded was the only one to tell the minister unpleasant things, without any fear. As a father, at least, I am glad of it.

"Oded has won many people's confidence. It is said that Arik Nehemkin, for example, truly loves him. He never betrayed a confidence and never burned himself with any politician. He has very clear rules concerning gossip, correctness, and loyalty. He has that from his mother. On the other hand, I have no doubt that his identification with and personal ties to Arik Sharon create a supporting view. We have had more than a few discussions about the Lebanon war. I am prepared to give 'Oded credit for the fact that had he been in Israel at the time of Sabra and Shatilla, perhaps things would not have happened. He would have simply treated the first reports and the dangers seriously, and everything would have looked different.

"'Oded was born in Tiberias. Actually, he was never a child. At age 7 he was reading all the newspapers. At age 8 he was talking politics with adults. He was always serious, wise, and punctilious. On Saturdays we eat lunch at 1 o'clock. 'Oded never arrived at 5 minutes past 1. He acquired his attitude to obligations and timetables at home. The same with loyalty, except that he has his own interpretation for it. He was always honest. As a student at the military academy, he never missed a day. We lived in Zefat at the time; one rainy day, 'Oded did not feel like returning to the academy. His mother told him to go to the doctor and get a note. He did. When he returned to the academy, it turned out that the entire class had done the same. The teacher asked each one of the students why he had not come back. Everyone stood up and said he had been sick. When 'Oded's turn came, he told the truth. I believe he would do the same thing today. I am working very hard on giving 'Oded a system of values and teaching him to tell the truth. Always in the bet possible way, but the truth.

"'Oded is gathering power, but as far as I and my wife are concerned, this power is no yardstick. We are not carried away by it, because that is how we tried to educate 'Oded."

Me'ir Shamir, a solid and down to earth man, is tall, suntanned, and wears a moustache. His physical appearance introduces him as a part of the land to which he is so close. There is silver in his hair and glasses on his nose. His smile is warm and friendly. His accent still betrays his country of origin. He spoke at length about 'Oded, and there were both apprehension and pride in his words. Just before we parted, he said: "There is no doubt in my mind that 'Oded sees the subject of loyalty in absolute terms, and that is why a young man in his position would always catch the lightning intended for Arik Sharon. I have been talking much too much," he finally added; "Say, could you tell that I love him?"

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SHAS DIRECTOR GENERAL INTERVIEWED ON POLITICS

Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 20 Sep 85 pp 17, 19

[Interview with Rabbi Arye Dar'i by Amnon Levy: "From God to Me"]

[Text] "The night after the elections," says Arye Dar'i, "Shimon Peres, Navon, Rabin, 'Uzi Bar 'Am, and Shakhal came to the home of Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef. They took a piece of paper, crumpled it, and said, 'Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef, you see this piece of paper? This is the Labor Alignment's platform. Take it and throw it in the garbage. It was not written according to our opinions.' They said it was written by little people, who copied the platform from what it was many years ago. The Labor Alignment offered us five times what the Likud offered us--two respectable positions, a vice ministership, and directorships of government corporations. Financially they promised us 10 times what we were promised and did not receive from the Likud. They promised to end the discrimination of the past, complete equality for yeshiva students, and cancellation of the law drafting girls. This was MAPAM's idea. We did not even want to sit and discuss details with them. Today the situation is different. MAPAM quit. Yosi Sarid left. The prime minister talks and acts completely differently. We do not disqualify anyone."

Even today, after being appointed director general of SHAS, Rabbi Arye Dar'i still holds the title of advisor to the minister of the interior. Anyone looking into what happened here will discover a strange, unique phenomenon: Dar'i is Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz's advisor, but Peretz was appointed by Dar'i. Prior to the Knesset elections, in SHAS it was decided that important rabbis should be drafted to top the list. The first position was saved for Rabbi Re'uven 'Elbaz, a born-again Jew. No one knew who would be the number two. Arye Dar'i went through the list of Sephardic city rabbis. In the middle, under the letter 'R' appeared: "Ra'anana--Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz." He went to Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef, the man responsible for putting the list together, and said: "They tell me the local rabbi in Ra'anana is okay." Rabbi Yosef responded: "He was a student of mine. Make me an appointment with him." Yosef and Peretz met. Peretz was put in second place on the list. Afterwards, due to family reasons, 'Elbaz's name was removed, and Rabbi Peretz of Ra'anana became the SHAS leader.

Dar'i confirms the story. True, he put Peretz on the list. "And Peretz," he says, "has not forgotten it to this day. He is angry with me about it." The image of "for the party's good" is not reserved only for the historical MAPAI.

At age 26, Arye Dar'i walks in and out of the offices of the prime minister, the acting prime minister, and senior ministers. Confidante of two great rabbis in the ultrareligious Lithuanian street, Rabbi Shakh and Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef, and sophisticated sort of Rafa'el Ben Natan, Dar'i does not like being compared to the "strong man of the National Religious Party." The idea of remaining all his life behind the curtains frightens him. During the first year and a half of SHAS he was a man of the shadows. Now he is galloping toward the stage. The fresh appointment to director generalship of the party is in his pocket. For the first time Dar'i can direct the great power that is in his hands, for himself as well.

Overthrowing Ben Shlomo

The appointment to the director generalship, like everything connected with Dar'i, did not pass without creating a little scandal in SHAS. The Secretariat of Rabbis chose Knesset member Shimon Ben Shlomo, one of the leaders of the internal opposition in SHAS, for the position of director general, Dar'i does not love Ben Shlomo and did not like the appointment. A few days after the choice he approached the Wise Men's Council of SHAS and requested to discuss the appointment. The council decided to cancel Ben Shlomo's appointment. The reason given: some of the rabbis who voted did not know how to vote. They put an x next to Ben Shlomo's name to signify that they wanted to erase his name. Instead it turned out they had voted for him. In short, Dar'i was appointed director general.

[Question] Why did you overthrow Ben Shlomo?

[Answer] The concept of an overthrow is incorrect. It is just you, with your secular spectacles, seeing it thus. Every Jew who is religiously educated heeds the Wise Men's Council. We all take upon ourselves the yoke of the Wise Men's Council happily. The council did not overthrow Ben Shlomo as Ben Shlomo per se. His name was not mentioned. It was decided that the director general should not be a Knesset member.

[Question] In an extremist religious party it is generally thought that age is wisdom. How did they choose a 26-year-old to be the director general?

[Answer] They say that the pope has never made a goal, not because he does not know how to kick but because he never tried kicking. Clearly, he who does nothing makes no mistakes. I also make mistakes.

[Question] Maybe it would be worthwhile to send you to study first for 10 years.

[Answer] A month and a half ago I went to Rabbi Shakh and Rabbi Yosef. I said that there are complaints against me, mostly complaints about age. I suggested that I take a vacation, perhaps for a year. They did not want to hear of it.

[Question] Maybe you will go take a vacation in the army. You never served in it.

[Answer] I have a draft notice for March 1986.

[Question] It has been postponed several times already. They say you do not want to be drafted.

[Answer] It was only postponed once. A married man with two children goes in for 4 months of service. I had reasons and they postponed my service for a year. I did not use any protection. I am informing you that I will go into the army.

[Question] The director general of SHAS will run around in the hills. Is an 18-year-old corporal going to hassle him?

[Answer] It is part of life.

A year and a half after the establishment of SHAS, it is not yet clear to many who come in contact with it where the heavy center of the party is. The official answer is clear: the Wise Men's Council. In fact, there is no one answer.

During the short time SHAS has existed, Dar'i has succeeded in placing himself between the two principal sources of authority: the Wise Men's Council and Rabbi Shakh. Once there was great enmity between Rabbi Shakh and Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef. When the latter was the chief rabbi, Rabbi Shakh announced that he would not agree to appear on any platform or pulpit on which Rabbi Yosef also was speaking. Something of this remains today. There are rivalries. There is tension. The Rabbi 'Ovadia sees Ethiopians as complete Jews. Rabbi Shakh wants them to undergo complete conversion. Arye Dar'i has acquired the task of being the go-between, a little link wielding a lot of power.

Within SHAS he has almost no support. Many are jealous of his success. And yet he rules. Everyone understands that to come out against Dar'i means to come out against the two principal sources of authority. In an extremist religious party this means to take oneself out of the majority. "Matters have reached the point," said one of the members of the rabbi's secretariat, "that speaking against a boy of 26 years has become an uprising against the greats of the Torah. Every word against him is like a word against the rabbis. Where has such a thing been heard of?"

[Question] There are complaints against you that you have, with great professionalism, gotten close to the rabbis out of a desire to acquire a position of power.

[Answer] I would be interested in meeting the Dar'i they describe. He is not at all like me. People think that government and a career are something nice. This is where the rumors and jealousy start.

Suhayyiq Opens the Door to Shakh

Arye Dar'i did not come from an extremist religious home. His parents are traditional and he, strangely, became an extremist. He reached the Hebrew Yeshiva in Jerusalem, one of the Lithuanian strongholds in the Agudat Israel. There he met David Yosef, the son of the Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef, who then was the chief rabbi. David was looking for a teacher for his little brother Moshe, the son of old age of the family. Dar'i, they say, did not get excited; the salary attracted him. For several years, he taught little Moshe Yosef, and became like a member of the family of the Sephardic chief rabbi.

The Yosef home is divided in such a way that it has a large room, used as a living room, as work room for 'Ovadia Yosef, and also a small synogogue. In one corner Dar'i would teach Moshe, and in another corner Rabbi 'Ovadia would carry out the business of the Chief Rabbinate. Slowly the great romance began. Dar'i was attracted to the power of Yosef, and Yosef was attracted to Dar'i's cleverness.

Then came the great crises of 'Ovadia Yosef: the fight with Rabbi Goren, the elections to the Rabbinate, his overthrow from the rabbinical office. Dar'i was active behind the scenes and became a loyal constant advisor of Yosef. He tried to prevent the overthrow and did not succeed. The religious parties gave him a knockout. When he saw how much power they held, he decided to establish SHAS. Without a political party there is no money, there are no positions, and there is no great honor. He convinced Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef to enter politics.

Rabbi Goren spoke loudly, while Dar'i and 'Ovadia Yosef worked. The first stage was a close followup after the Agudat Israel. Dar'i's gamble was that the conflict between the Hasids and Lithuanians in the Agudat Israel would develop and Rabbi Shakh would agree to support an extremist Lithuanian Sephardic list. Dar'i began acting in order to get closer to Rabbi Shakh. He quickly located the man through whom he could make contact with him--Rabbi Yehezkel Suhayyiq, the caretaker, chief driver, and man closest to Rabbi Shakh. Even his Sephardic background suited Dar'i. Within a short time he had succeeded in becoming his close friend. The path to Shakh was open.

At Age 26, Director General

Influenced by the structure of Agudat Israel, Dar'i decided that a Council of Wise Men of the Torah must be established. He brought suggestions to Rabbi 'Ovadia and the latter installed anonymous wise men around himself--Ba'adani, Cohen, and Aton. Not many are familiar with these wise men. It also is not important. What is important is that SHAS has a superior spiritual council. While the Council of Wise Men of Agudat Israel is crumbling, and when followers of Gur beat up Knesset member Forush a few months prior to the elections, Dar'i knew that his great plan was about to succeed. Only 24 years old at that time, he could credit himself with an amazing achievement.

[Question] At age 24 you established a party, and at age 26 you were appointed director general. Are you surprised at yourself?

[Answer] When I account to myself, I am surprised to discover that only 2 years ago I was still sitting and studying in a yeshiva and today I barely manage to open a book for a few minutes in the morning or the evening. My life has changed. The life of my family has also.

[Question] They say that in fact you are the interior minister.

[Answer] I am far from running the Interior Ministry. There are people who want to flatter me and say that. I do not remember anything I have done without consulting Rabbi Peretz.

[Question] And the relationship with Rabbi 'Ovadia?

[Answer] The relationship of a student and a rabbi.

[Question] You are like a son there.

[Answer] That is a true student. He is like a spiritual father. Many things in my life have happened thanks to him. I was nothing before Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef.

[Question] And he acts according to your advice.

[Answer] God forbid. I just bring him data. He is the decider.

[Question] And Rabbi Shakh?

[Answer] Since I was a little boy, Rabbi Shakh has been a great personality for me. I consulted him prior to marrying. He is the leader of the generation.

[Question] And he is the dominant character between you both.

[Answer] Untrue. Most of the things are decided by the Wise Men's Council. And beyond that, the opinion of the council in most cases is that of Rabbi Shakh.

[Question] Do you discuss other matters with Rabbi Shakh as well?

[Answer] Everything. Yesterday I was at his place until 12:00 midnight. I was asking his advice on getting a new apartment, if I should take on financial obligations and so forth.

[Question] Do you speak with him about the pleasures of this world as well?

[Answer] No, no, that is not a type of friendship. This is the status of student and Rabbi. He tells me the outlook of the Torah.

[Question] Do you talk about children?

[Answer] Oh, definitely. He always asks: 'How is little Simkha, how is Yank?' He takes an interest.

[Question] When you enter do you kiss his hand?

[Answer] No. The Ashkenazis do not do that. I kiss the hand of Rabbi 'Ovadia every time I enter, even three times a day. Also with Mrs Yosef, there is a relationship. She is like a little mother to me.

[Question] In 10 years you will be 36 years old. How will SHAS look then?

[Answer] I hope not to see SHAS in 10 years. I pray every day for the Messiah to come and then there will be no need for parties. The whole matter of parties is a matter of retrospect and not something since creation.

[Question] Which is to say?

[Answer] SHAS was established because, for 30 years, a certain public was discriminated against. I hope that there will no longer be a need for it.

[Question] In 10 years there will not be discrimination?

[Answer] If our prayers are answered and the Messiah comes.

[Question] And if he puts the visit off for more than 10 years?

[Answer] I think that SHAS has to focus on what it has focused on up til now--quiet accomplishment, caring for the problems of the individual and the problems of all of Israel, not by fighting for the narrow interests of its voters but for the problems of the individual in general. It is clear that in 10 years we will be more established. We will have offices. I just hope that we will not be like the other parties.

[Question] The religious ones?

[Answer] The religious ones as well. The greatest fear I have is to be the party of the liberals. Good, okay, I do not even want to reach the situation of Agudat Israel. Many people forgot their mission. I hope that SHAS will not forget.

[Question] What is the mission? Protection, begging?

[Answer] My brief experience as advisor to the minister of the interior and as secretary of the Council of Wise Men shows that we have gotten thousands of people. This is not protection. You know how the system is built. A citizen not being pushed by someone above does not get solutions for problems.

Ben Gurion Freed

[Question] This is why SHAS was established? What about religious laws?

[Answer] A representative of the public who has risen needs to continue dealing with the problems of the individual. That shows he did not forget his people, and it is also an investment over the long run. We also have other matters to be dealt with, such as what we did over the last weeks, the Ramat Gan stadium, the trolley cars in Haifa, the shopping center.

[Question] At this pace, in 10 years will we all be wearing Streimal hats?

[Answer] There was an intentional evil in the communications media and those who direct them in how to present us. The prime minister understood us on this matter. I, as a Jew, am proud that we have a prime minister who is so open to matters of religion.

[Question] You are the last one that I would suspect of not knowing that Peres does not act out of love of religion but rather from hatred of the opposition.

[Answer] These struggles are not over new matters, but rather for the preservation of the status quo.

[Question] And what are you planning for us in the future?

[Answer] The week that Rabbi Peretz was appointed minister of the interior there was a headline in YEDIOT AHARONOT that Rabbi Peretz intended to close all of the beaches. Afterwards they wrote that Rabbi Peretz intended to close all the cinemas. It is clear that this was intended to frighten people. We have no intention of ruling the life of the country. We have no intention of imposition. Our goal is to bring the word of the Lord peacefully.

[Question] Closing a stadium and stopping the trolley cars are peaceful means?

[Answer] All we did was done by democratic and legitimate means. The prime minister understood the significance of the stadium in Ramat Gan. This is not breaking the Sabbath. This is uprooting the Sabbath from Israel.

[Question] And Peres did it out of honor for the Sabbath?

[Answer] I do not probe into the kidneys and the heart. I just know that the prime minister said unequivocally that the Sabbath is not a subject of coalition, and he is a student of Ben Gurion who freed the yeshiva students from serving in the army and who understood that the laws of the state have to be according to the Halakha.

[Question] SHAS frightens me, it gives me shivers.

[Answer] That encourages me very much. People are not afraid of the NRP. They are not afraid of the Agudat Israel. Everyone understands that those are phenomena that have passed. SHAS is a young power. Therefore I understand the worry. He who is familiar with Sephardic Jewry knows that there is no jealousy and no epicureanism there. Sephardic Jewry have never known extremism, or what stone throwing on the Sabbath is. You will not see us at demonstrations.

[Question] You are frightening in what you have already imposed on us.

[Answer] We are in a democratic country. Whoever needs our power to put together a government also needs to give us consideration.

[Question] What in the end do you want to achieve?

[Answer] That my son and your daughter will be able to marry.

[Question] How is it that Rabbi Shakh, who does not read the newspapers or see television, can decide about political and public matters?

[Answer] Do not forget that he is up-to-date. Since SHAS started, Rabbi Peretz comes to see him every Thursday. Rabbi Shapira comes once a week. Rabbi Lorenz is sure to come once a week. I come twice a week. A Jew who meets with major politicians four times during the week is not going to be up-to-date?

Only One Who Spoke Against

[Question] I, for example, am worried that he decides about central issues facing Israel.

[Answer] It is the right of the State of Israel to have one leader like this. The greatness of Rabbi Shakh is that he and other rabbis can see ahead steps that we do not see. Rabbi Shakh opposed in advance, before everyone, the war in Lebanon. He was the only one to speak against it. He did not even want to hear about 40 km.

[Question] Rabbi Shakh and Yosi Sarid... .

[Answer] Make a distinction. Make a distinction.

[Question] SHAS is a very dovish party.

[Answer] The leadership of the Council of Wise Men and Rabbi Shakh think that in today's situation, where we are dependent upon the powers of the world, we do not have to provoke the non-Jews. In politics this is expressed in a dovish outlook.

[Question] But Rabbi Peretz is a hawk.

[Answer] But he most definitely goes along with the decisions of the Council of Wise Men of the Torah.

[Question] Why didn't Rabbi Shakh meet with Peres?

[Answer] What I know is as a private individual. I am not at liberty to tell everything. Perhaps there was public expectation that the prime minister would meet with the leader of the generation, but I do not know if there was any basis for this expectation.

[Question] Are we going to see you as a member of the next Knesset?

[Answer] I hope very much and pray not.

[Question] And know that the answer is yes.

[Answer] It has never been spoken of. Whoever appoints the Council of Wise Men will be the Knesset member.

[Boxes on p 17; Quotes by Dar'i]

Yitzhak Shamir: "Closed. Hard to talk with, but gives the impression of having the ability to make decisions. A responsible man."

Shimon Peres: "He is a great surprise to me. The image which I was presented of him was of a man with no interests other than himself. They said he is unreliable and ineffective. My impression, mine and that of other people in SHAS, is that he is a pleasant, intelligent man who is patient and tolerant. He is the right man in the right place."

David Levy: "A friendly, open man. He keeps religious traditions. There is a relationship of a Moroccan with a Moroccan, and we sometimes speak together in French or in Moroccan. There are some jokes which sound better in Moroccan."

Moshe Shakhal: "I take my hat off to Shakhal. We have a friendly relationship. I would prefer that in the future he not be in charge of the negotiations for the Alignment..."

Boxes on p 19; Quotes about Dar'i]

'Uzi Bar 'Am: "The most sagacious man in SHAS. He does not carry out unnecessary negotiations such as we have seen in the past from the religious. He has the high-level backing of Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef. I find that we are in agreement on some political issues. It is clear that today Arye Dar'i is the key to SHAS."

Haim Kopfman: "Within a year and a half Dar'i has become a part of politics as though he were born in it. He navigates with wisdom and cleverness. His problem was to sell and to present a new party in the Knesset whose perceptions are not known. He did this excellently."

Knesset member Avraham Vardiger: "Unusually talented. Understands politics better than many members of the Knesset. Knows how to make ties. It does not surprise me that at age 26 he has become the director general. Whoever appointed him knew what he was doing."

Roni Milo: "Without a doubt he is the important link in all negotiations with SHAS. Aggressive and talented. Quickly understands what you want, and knows how to present his position nicely."

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HAWK MISSILE DEPLOYMENT

Tel Aviv BITA'ON HEYL HA'AVIR in Hebrew Jul 85 pp 42, 43, 65

[Article by Riki Rivlin: "Ad Hoc" ((pun on 'Up to a Hawk'))]

[Text] From afar the tall hill seems to be a part of the Galilean landscape: pine needle-shaped trees, thick sticky silt bustling with vegetation, and next to them, between the cliffs, as though hiding, the protected wildflowers that one does not pick. Only when you reach the peak, after the car has almost given up on the steep incline, can the difference be distinguished. In the heart of this nature preserve, 24 hours a day, an antiaircraft battery operates with a small group of people. The structures are surrounded by walls that are amazingly chiseled, stone by stone, as a defense against unexpected attack. The Hawk missiles are positioned on their launch pads, ready for operation.

This battery is one of those responsible for the northern airspace of the State of Israel. Every hour of the day the heart of the battery is manned, since it is a control center. Facing radar screens, the soldiers are alert to identify every airplane for a radius of 110 m and to warn, if necessary, of the penetration of an enemy airplane. When a suspicious movement of an airplane is identified, the battery goes into a state of high readiness and the missiles attempt to "lock on" the target. In the meantime, additional information is received: elevation of the airplane, its speed, and electronic warfare capabilities. The computer decides if the target is within firing range.

First Lieutenant Ofer is the young commander of the unit, which is responsible for the normal operation of the battery. "Our location receives a large number of airplanes. It is only natural that readiness warnings sound here daily. That is also the reason we sit with our fingers constantly on the trigger."

Downing Is a Bonus

First Lt Ofer sat across from us, calm and relaxed. On the blackboard behind him hung a large map of the air space, which the battery defends. Suddenly, as if to make his words tangible, a long thunderous siren was heard. From the nearby door we could see soldiers rushing to their positions. The control center immediately received reinforcements of an officer and a technician, the missiles prepared for immediate firing, and all the equipment was manned by additional soldiers. It was reported that a suspicious airplane had been detected, of the Mig-25 model.

Ofer toured the positions with us and made sure that everything was going as it should. Not even a drop of tension could be seen on his face. Only if he hears a rising and falling siren, he knows that he has to run to the radar. But in the meantime it became known that the Mig has moved away and the danger has passed. The battery many times has reached the point of almost firing, but real firing is something rare.

"One of these was seen on the Sabbath, 6 October 1973, at about 2:00 P.M. Before the Yom Kipper War began, the enemy airplanes appeared on the radar screens of the battery. That was the first Syrian offensive wave," recalled Lieutenant Colonel M, commander of the regiment to which he belonged at that time as a junior officer.

The battery's soldiers "caught" the penetrating airplanes, "locked" on them from afar, and with one shot downed a Sohoy-7 from the structure which fell apart. "The happiness was very controlled," recalled Captain (Reserves) Yosi. "Immediately after the downing of the airplane we returned to readiness state and tense anticipation."

Said Lt Col M: "The success of antiaircraft units is generally based on the number of downings. In my opinion, first of all, the quality of the system should be measured by its ability to stop enemy attempts to penetrate and to distance him from the target. The actual downing is a bonus and not always the main goal."

This downing goes down as a high point in the life of the battery. Most of the people have never seen a Hawk missile sent toward a target.

"Recently," revealed Ofer, "a decision was made at the highest level to allocate more Hawk missiles to a live range which will be held each year. Thus the soldiers will actually be able to see the launching of a real missile."

And yet, how does one overcome the frustration of the many who have not yet been so privileged?

"The most accepted means," continued Ofer, "is by means of simulator training, which simulates firing at simulated targets. As in reality, the simulator helps in overcoming electronic warfare and, after the firing reports are received, in measuring the degree of accuracy of the hit. The second way of practicing is executed by means of joint exercises with Air Force squadrons. According to pre-planning, airplanes 'attack' the battery, and we enact war procedures against them, except that instead of missiles, we use dummies. Afterward the computer gives pronouncements on the accuracy of the strike. By means of these training sessions we have recently built warfare and fighting doctrines."

An Eye on Every Light

The quality Hawk missile has been adapted in the Israeli Air Force during the war in Lebanon and is considered, according to Ofer, the best surface-air missile found today in the arena. It can hit any target within a radius of 42 km and up to an elevation of 18 km. Its range of speed at which it is able to follow a target--Mach 3-- is greater than the speed ranges of the airplanes that are in use. It is also able to follow targets that maneuver at any elevation. As for semi-acting homing, continuous-wave radar, its efficiency is greater especially against low-elevation targets. In the quality Hawk, the computer is an integral part in the system. It analyses the data quickly and gives a recommendation if it is worth shooting at the target.

"Part of the challenge of serving here stems from the pressure of the work, from the short amount of time at our disposal to use the equipment. Sometimes there is no difference between day and night. And yet I feel at home here, " said Staff Sergeant Ayal, who has served in the battery for 2 and 1/2 years as a fire control technician on the radar. The technicians comprise about half of all the people in the battery and are considered fighters.

The Hawk missile system combines within it electronic technologies, the earliest of which were developed in the early fifties and the latest in the late seventies. Difficulties in maintenance are greater than difficulty adapting them to the sophisticated technology of the eighties. Locating problems in the system, and the ability to operate it, require a high level of skill on the part of the operator, "and therefore," said 1st Lt Ofer, "the people who come to the battery have a higher than average IQ, and the intensive activity forces a feeling of responsibility in them. Everyone cares. They know what the expectations of the Air Force are from the system and are ready to invest all that is necessary in order that the system will perform well when it is required."

"People at all levels have become accustomed to sleeping in their clothing. And above all, every soldier recognizes the operational importance of the battery and the importance of its being in the location in which it is situated. Therefore, there are almost no cases of carelessness. On the contrary, when one sees that one tiny light is not functioning, the officer in charge is immediately informed. It is enough that one little light bulb not function for the firing not to succeed."

The northern Hawk battery about which we are talking is comprised of a number of detection radars, whose job is to locate the target; a locking radar, whose task is to direct the missile to the precise spot of the target; and a launching mechanism, each of which have three missiles.

The battery is part of an antiaircraft regiment, but in fact it operates as an independent unit and functions as a base. "By ourselves we run the battery and there is a lot of room for personal initiative," said Ofer.

"Sometimes, for example, in cooperation with a control unit we decide to 'send in' a suspicious airplane to be picked up on the radar and check how the battery goes into readiness, and just before they fire we inform them that it is just an exercise. The result is that within minutes of a warning we can send a missile. Our battery serves as an example of operational usability, of rapid execution of missions, and of a good social structure. Recently we even received first place in practical tests of all the antiaircraft units. The positive 'feedback' we get from the commander of the Air Force and from the commander of the Antiaircraft Forces definitely raises our motivation."

First Lt Ofer, 22 years old, from Ramat Gan, has been with the battery nearly 2 years. For 8 months he has served as its commander. He is responsible for equipmnnt worth millions of dollars. The cost of one Hawk missile alone is about $250,000.

"Every company in the battery has one soldier, who is a sort of miniature commander, certified for the position after undergoing testing by the commander of the battery and by the regiment commander. Usually this is the best soldier, both professionally and in the command, and not necessarily the most veteran," explained Ofer.

Due to the distance from the center of the country and the constant activity, they do not go home much. In the few free hours they have they sit in the clubroom. Sometimes they play pool. In the summer they go swimming in the Kinneret, in the winter they go folk dancing in Kiryat Shmoneh, and when they stay for the Sabbath sometimes they have parties.

In between, Ofer finds a lot of time for discussions with the soldiers. Here there is almost no "distance" between soldiers and officers. Dependency between people is high; everyone works together, even the dining room is a joint one. "Work in such a harsh framework demands good personal relationships," as Ofer defined it. "Usually a normal work day here starts with a thorough check of the system: the ammunition is taken off the missiles, and we fire using simulators. Crew leaders from the control center carry out checks and make sure that the judgments are correct. Afterwards we do a lot of cleaning of the equipment and there is competition among the soldiers as to who has the cleanest piece of equipment."

The First Girls

Service in the battery is considered especially difficult service, and before now girls were not assigned to the antiaircraft battery. In the framework of a special experiment about a year ago the first female soldiers arrived at the battery. Second Lieutenant Dafna from Caesarea was among them. "When I reached basic training I did not know a thing about life in antiaircraft," she recalled. "I requested an assignment with a challenge and thus I arrived here. The conditions indeed are not easy, but I have always tried to do everything as well as possible. Here, along with the great responsibility given me, I get a great deal of satisfaction from the work in the profession."

Along with Dafna other girls serve in the battery. "None of us receives any special treatment from the male soldiers in the group. The opposite: the same responsibilities, except for night watch, are given the women," said Dafna.

After serving for 8 months on the battery, Dafna went to a course for antiaircraft officers, and along with her colleague in the course, Second Lieutenant Edith, she joined the battery as an antiaircraft officer.

Dafna's parents have already gotten used to the idea of their daughter's special job. She also has nothing to explain to her boyfriend, since he served in the very same battery during his Army service....

In about 4 months 1st Lt Ofer will complete his service as commander of the battery. "Since I arrived here there has been an improvement in the professional level of the battery as a whole and of certain components," he said. With a rare mixture of modesty and self-esteem however, his words should never be taken as expressing satisfaction. There is always something to learn, there is always room for improvement in order to obtain the best results. "The nature of the place and the nature of the people cause strong ties to be created. Everyone here live as equals, and I have no doubt that I will miss this place."

The antiaircraft fighters take an active part in the defense of the skies of the country 365 days a year. Their activities usually are a part of those mysterious secret chapters that it is forbidden to tell of. As commander of one of the best batteries, Ofer gives great credence to antiaircraft warfare in the battlefield of the fuuure. With sincere excitement he said to us: "I definitely think that antiaircraft systems, and especially the Hawk, have not yet said their last words. I believe with complete confidence in the reliability of the system and am convinced that the training and cooperation exercises during quiet times train the battery to work in a realistic situation and when it comes, the operation of the system will be the best it is possible to expect. That is to say, we will succeed in downing any airplane which threatens the skies of the country."

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FLIGHT SIMULATOR DESCRIBED

Tel Aviv BITA'ON HEYL HA'AVIR in Hebrew Jul 85 pp 32,33, 89

[Article by Gil Bar-Tal: "As Though To Fly"]

[Text] With a quiet whistling sound the clear canopy lowered and closed the cabin hermetically. Despite the air conditioning, I sweated profusely. I try to recall the precise instructions which I received from Captain G. I had never flown an airplane and even in my wildest imagination I did not think I would sit in the pilot's cabin of one of the best war planes in the world, the F-16. With great effort I overcame my desire to keep out of the whole thing, but I understood that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that would not arise again.

"Open the engine a bit," G's voice cut through the radio. Time for thinking and fears over, I gently pushed the throttle forward and released the brakes. The airplane began to move slowly and with the aid of the pedals I drove it to the runway. This was the twilight hour and the runway lights blinked opposite me. I stopped at the starting line: "Permission for takeoff granted!" I heard G's calm voice. From far off I could make out Haifa hidden between the Carmel hills. I took a long breath and pushed the throttle forward. The plane left its place and with dizzying speed started down the runway. The lights on the runway passed me speedily and disappeared far behind. "Now pull!" Automatically I pulled. The F-16 lightly took off. I did not forget the instructions and I pulled on the handle to pull in the wheels. The wheels quickly entered the belly of the airplane with the sound of a faint stroke.

As though in a dream I found myself traveling at a speed of 800 knots at an elevation of 4,000 feet in a westerly direction. My first attempts to control the airplane did not succeed and the plane lost height quickly while whirling. With difficulty I overcame a strong feeling of nausea and tried to pick up the nose. Several times I lost control but finally I succeeded in stabilizing the airplane and even in flying it a little. The principle is quite simple: after you have learned to maintain elevation and to move in space, the "game" is reduced to a controlled and delicate operation of the "stick" and the throttle.

I turned 180 degrees in the direction of the pale lights of Haifa. "You are quickly losing elevation. Pay attention!" At the sound of his warning I pulled the stick toward me and operated the burners. The F-16 reacted with astounding rapidity; I stabilized at 15,000 feet. Above Haifa I turned southward and, at full force, toward Tel Aviv. A slender line of minute specks of light outlined the Shore Road for me. On the horizon I identified the two huge chimneys of the Hadera power station. In a moment of absent-mindedness I turned on the torches and dove wildly downward. The G-force glued me to the seat and in a number of seconds, which seemed like an eternity, I succeeded in picking up the nose and rising sharply upward. When I straightened out at 10,000 feet, I could see the Dan Region in all its glory. Hundreds of thousands of lights were lit below From far off it was possible to distinguish the runways of Ben Gurion Airport.

I broke east in the direction of the Judaean desert and asked permission to try the artillery. Permission granted. I shifted the switch marked Dog Fight and fumbled for the artillery trigger located on the stick. I found the trigger and squeezed...a short burst of fire roared out and lightly rocked the airplane. A number of glowing dots disappeared on the horizon. Suddenly the gasoline light started to flash. I announced on the radio that I was coming back, and turned northward. Quite quickly I again spotted the lights of Haifa. I veered slightly eastward and distinguished the lights of the runway of a northern Air Force base. The first two attempts to reach the runway failed. The third attempt was more successful, and I succeeded in making contact between the rear wheels and the runway. Slowly I brought the nose down, a light bump, and the entire F-16 was on the runway and quickly ran toward the end. "Start braking gently and quickly!" I heard G. I pressed on the pedals and the airplane did not slow down. I pressed harder and the airplane did not respond. I saw the runway lights running past with a dizzying speed and the end of the "line" approaching. I left the "stick" and the throttle and stood on the pedals, pressing with all my strength. It was clear to me that it was already too late....

Suddenly the airplane left the path and entered a plowed field, and after a series of strong moving about, it was all over. Somebody disconnected the canopy. Sweating and shaking, I exited. A number of laughing pilots received me. A cold blast of wind hit my exhausted body. Slowly I descended the boarding staircase, away from the simulator which some say is the best in the world....

Pilot is "Glued" to His Chair

At the edge of one of the Air Force vases the F-16 simulator is "parked." A large building houses the entire training center for the F-16. This is the only installation in the Air Force, in which under one roof are housed all the training equipment for a specific airplane. In the past pilots were sent for retraining to join the squadron which operates the airplane, and they would learn right there how to operate it. Today all the pilots that have been chosen for training to operate F-16's are sent to the center, where they undergo complete ground retraining. People at the installation have taken care to produce training film, update the operations procedures, etc.

The simulator in operation here is the most expensive and most sophisticated in the Middle East, they say at the training center. It stands in line with the best, most modern simulators in the world. In Israel there have been simulators for many years already, but the principal deficiency of these simulators is the absence of a system to represent the real world. This deficiency prevents the pilot from obtaining the most essential information. The pilot is forced to fly in a sealed cabin and to drill solely in instrumental flight.

One of the principal components of the F-16 simulator is the vital exhibitory system, a product of General Electric. Using a number of large television screens, the pilot sees a complete picture of the flight. The pictures are "created" in one of the departments of the installation with the use of a computer. The computer system, which operates with the CGI (Computer-generated Imagery) method, creates a true-to-life surface-air picture, which even includes such small details as hills, airports, streets, and cities. Due to memory limitations, the overall picture is made up of a number of pictures stored on separate disks and in accordance with the flight course the computer moves from picture to picture.

In order to give the pilot the sense of a real flight, bulky hydraulic systems were installed in the old simulators, which stimulated the "sense threshold" by vibrating the cockpit. In the F-16 trainer the external world picture creates the greatest effect. In addition to this system the planners used innovative methods; the cockpit does not have a hydraulic system. The physical sensation is provided by the pilot's seat. In the seat, 28 air pillows have been installed which fill and empty with air in accordance with the actions of the pilot. For example: during an exercise which causes a G-force, the computer orders the air pump which fills and empties the pillows so that the pilot feels that he is "glued" to his seat. Via trembling in the seat, the pilot feels bombs falling, the airplane shaking, missile and artillery fire, and other actions. The "true" picture is completed by a sophisticated sound system through which the trainee hears the same noises which would accompany him on a "wet" flight.

MiGs Above Herzliya

Captain G talks about the importance of the trainer to the F-16 array: "The flight trainer enables the F-16 fliers to practice in a wide variety of missions and situations, which it is difficult and dangerous to perform in a real flight. We will not put an entire airplane in danger to test the behavior of the pilot during an engine fire, engine failure, cr other situations."

The trainer is the principal device at our command in order to test and train in practical emergency situations. We are able with the simulator to train for such rare situations as attacks on airports deep in enemy territory, operation of ammunition switches, air battles with enemy airplanes, and more."

There are a number of significant advantages to a simulated flight over a "wet" flight. In the conditions of limited airspace over the State of Israel, the pilot in the trainer can fly any course or area he desires, taking into consideration, of course, the limitations of the courses which are preserved on the disks. In bad weather conditions, real flights are cancelled. In the simulator this limitation does not exist--even the weather can be "controlled."

These days it is hard to ignore the limitations of the budget. While a "wet" flight in an F-16 costs $9,700 per flight hour, the cost of a simulated hour is $600. Human error in a flight can end in the loss of an airplane, which is worth $18 million. A serious error of the trainee in the simulator will cause, in the worst cases, some heart pounding and the end of the flight. When we inquire about the number of flight hours saved as a result of the use of the simulator, the response is surprising: "In the retraining course we save a number of sudden onslaughts, but their number is insignificant," reveals Captain G. He explains: "Just as you cannot teach a man to swim on dry land, we do not pretend to teach a pilot to fly an F-16 by using a trainer. An hour in the simulator cannot take the place of a real flight hour. In order to be a good pilot, the pilot has to spend time in the air. The flights in the trainer contribute to the quality of the pilot and his operational ability and serve as an important enrichment experience."

The simulator was acquired in 1982 from General Electric Corporation for $25 million. It arrived in Israel with a technical crew, which spent a year abroad learning to operate it. In the center of the simulator hall stands the cockpit, and around it the television screens. A number of meters away, the heart of the installation is housed--five large computers, to which the data flow. A number of small auxiliary computers are positioned near them. On the other side of the hall is the presentation computer. This sophisticated system is controlled by the human trainer's post.

At the end of the onslaught the trainer fills out a detailed report regarding the ability of the pilot. One of the great advantages of the simulator, as a training tool, lies in the possibility of freezing the picture when the trainee makes a mistake and rerunning the situation and learning from the mistakes. "Of course it is within our capability to serve as a center for classifying the pilots' level, but we prefer to act as teachers and not as examiners," in Captain G's words.

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MAJOR GENERAL AMOS LAPIDOT INTERVIEWED

Tel Aviv BITA'ON HEYL HA'AVIR in Hebrew Jul 85 pp 10, 12, 14

[Interview with Major General Amos Lapidot by Aharon Lapidot: "The Cuts Will Stop at Quality"]

[Text] [Question] Maj Gen Lapidot, how has Air Force activity been influenced by the withdrawal from Lebanon?

[Answer] To a great extent the withdrawal from Lebanon decreased helicopter and cargo plane activity, which participated in missions with the ground forces. This decrease in activity created a positive respite, especially for the helicopters, which worked extremely hard in Lebanon. Of course, hard work does not frighten us, but the workload of missions hurt the helicopter squadron training programs. Since our return to the international border, the helicopters have resumed orderly, normal training.

The battle array, in contrast, has been almost unaffected by the withdrawal. Reconnaissance and photography missions in the skies over Lebanon continue today after the withdrawal.

As to the antiaircraft array, the easing up is obvious in that the soldiers are no longer inside Lebanon, although they are spread along the international border, on the front line.

[Question] How much has the eastern front been built up? What are its dangers?

[Answer] The eastern front as it is defined--that is, a coalition of four countries, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, who are turned against Israel--in fact does not exist today. However, each of those countries continues, separately, to strengthen, to build up, and to absorb new means of fighting.

The most outstanding development was, of course, in Syria, after the war in Lebanon. The Syrian build-up process included the introduction of modern command and control systems, use of advanced technology and greater coverage of air space--especially by means of SA-5 missiles and the introduction of airplanes with advanced radar and missiles.

The threats heard recently from the president of Syria, that Israeli cities are within range of Syrian missiles, are not new. They have been heard in the past. These threats are based on means which are in Syria's possession, especially ground-to-ground missiles, the Scud and Frog models.

The threat has sharpened. However, we do not believe there is any significant strategic change in the wake of the enemy is adoption of these missiles. We try to take these threats for what they are worth and to find suitable solutions for them. At the same time, we have to take into account the possibility that in the next war, should it break out, civilian targets may be hit in the territory of the State of Israel.

[Question] Has the Syrian land-air missile array also developed and improved?

[Answer] Definitely, I already covered the absorption of the SA-5 missiles, to which must be added the massive increase in the number of SA-8 batteries, of which the Syrians had only a few before the war. As for the SA-5 batteries, it should be noted that today they are manned by Syrian soldiers and not by Russians, as was the case in the past.

[Question] What is the influence of the Iran-Iraq war on the balance of forces in the area?

[Answer] The principal effect is in the experience which the fighting countries accumulate, experience which one day could be turned against us. In addition, the Iraqis have expanded their army dramatically as a result of the war, and despite the heavy losses (on both sides), the Iraqi Army is larger today than ever before.

[Question] What is the danger in the supplying of new airplanes and missiles to Jordan? How strong and determined is our opposition to this move?

[Answer] The most striking danger is the fact that Jordanian airplanes have no range problem regarding many targets in the State of Israel. The degree of danger will increase if more advanced airplanes appear in the arena, such as the Mirage-2000, the F-16, and the F-20. Such new-model airplanes in Jordan add a new dimension to the threat.

Accordingly, we are trying to do all we can to prevent receipt of such weapons systems by the Jordanians. The means to achieve this and the degree of determination are in the hands of the decision makers at the political level.

[Question] What is the part of the Air Force in dealing with the hijacking of civilian airplanes?

[Answer] In case of a hijacking of an airplane in our area I see three principal areas of consideration. First, the political level is said to decide if there is room for entering into negotiations with the hijackers.

Second, an investigation of the military option and a decision of this option should be adopted. The third matter--preventing unwanted airplanes from reaching our territory or carrying out a hostile flight in the skies over Israel--this is the aspect which the Air Force is supposed to deal with. A regular Air Force alert is definitely enough for this, which is supposed to suffice to deal with every type of threat, in order to deal also with the problem of airplane hijackings.

[Question] One of the threats heard from the hijackers of the TWA airplane was that they would blow up the airplane over Tel Aviv. Does such a possibility exist?

[Answer] As I already noted, the Air Force is prepared with solutions for airplanes that fly hostile flights in the skies over the country.

[Question] What reductions has the Air Force made in its activities? Are there "red lines" to such cuts?

[Answer] The budget and personnel cuts, which were put on us over the last year, have not enabled us to stick with the original work plans. For awhile already we have had no fat or projects which are "nice to have." The reduction in resources demands a significant cut in the Air Force's activities and a decrease in the size of the forces. We faced a difficult dilemma of quality versus quantity. We could have preserved the size of the operational array of the Air Force and absorbed the reduction by reducing activity. We did not go that way, since reducing the activity means first and foremost reducing training hours. Therefore, we decided to do all we could not to hurt the quality even if it meant some lowering of qualtity.

From the quantitative aspect, the proportions of forces always were against us, and we were never able to stand plane for plane and missile for missile.

We gambled on the quality advantage--human, technical, and tactical. We also emphasized the educational-value side. Today, we are forced, as was stated, to decrease even further the size of the forces. If we reached the "red line" from the quality standpoint, is that from the point of the size of the Air Force? It is impossible to give an unambivalent response to that. What is clear is that the only possibility we have to compensate for the decrease in quantity is by means of a careful preservation of quality. And even that is not yet in our pocket. We have great difficulty in preserving the existing level of activity.

[Question] Does not a moment come when it is no longer possible to compensate for the decrease in the size of the Air Force by quality alone?

[Answer] These two factors, quantity and quality, do not meet each other exactly as in a mathematical equation, where you can reduce one of the factors and enlarge the second and where the results will remain unchanged. There are serious limitations as to how far the force can be reduced. Quality cannot provide a response to a quantity intersection that is too large.

[Question] Does a problem of "Kahanism" exist in the Air Force" When you meet with soldiers or from the response of the officers, are there signs of trends dangerous to democracy?

[Answer] I am not familiar with these phenomena in the Air Force. At the same time it should be recalled that the Air Force, like the rest of the IDF, is part of the Israeli public. Thus, when an ordinary person who is a "Kahanist" goes into the reserve service in the Air Force, it is not likely that he will change his opinions as a result of reserve service. We are also familiar with the polls of political opinions common among high school students. These students arrive after a short time after graduation to start their military service, some to the Air Force. At the same time, soldiers who have served longer are more balanced and, I believe, even more democratic than the fringes of society.

[Question] Has the phenomenon of reborn Judaism increased in the Air Force?

[Answer] On the contrary. There is a decrease and a waning of the matter, if we are speaking about joining extremist anti-Zionist trends.

[Question] Is voluntary enlistment in the Air Force by kibbutz members on the increase or decrease?

[Answer] Voluntary enlistment in the Air Force by kibbutz members is in a slight upward trend. After some decrease, which went on until about 2 years ago, we are again witnessing a trend of increases in voluntary enlistments. However, they are not in the proportions we knew in the past, but the trend is increasing.

The success of kibbutz members in the flight course remains, however, without change--it is high.

[Question] What especially impressed you during your visit to the Air Show in La Bourget this year?

[Answer] On the one hand, I was impressed by the great activity in various technological areas. On the other hand, I was impressed that today there is no breakthrough in the form of new airplanes. One of the reasons for this is that the development of a new airplane has become an expensive project, complex and difficult. The airplanes that today are on the drafting table or in the factories will be able to fly only in a year or two. Such airplanes are being planned in France, Britain, and other places.

In the area of avionics systems there has been great development, in the civilian area as well, ultralight airplanes and so forth.

[Question] What are the equipping trends in the Air Force?

[Answer] The economic situation makes equipping weapons and new systems difficult. One project about to be realized is the receipt of the new F-16 airplanes. And we continue to receive Kfir C-7 airplanes. The Lavi prototype is supposed to fly in about a year and the Air Force will equip with it at the beginning of the nineties.

In light of the budgetary difficulties and the difficulties in acquiring new airplanes, we are making every effort to improve the existing airplanes, with the most outstanding project in this area being the project to improve the Phantom airplanes. But there is an improvement plan for other airplanes as well.

We place strong emphasis, as a result of the economic situation, on increased use of simulators, like, for example, the advanced F-16 simulator which we acquired a while ago. The simulators today are improving and they are better than in the past at approximating the real world. The first investment in a simulator is large, but the savings later make it worthwhile.

[Question] Does a personnel project exist in the Air Force?

[Answer] Due to the economic situation in the country, we were forced to reduce the number of personnel and to eliminate hundreds of permanent positions, not because we thought it the best way to save money but because we were directed, in addition to making reductions, to fire people.

Another problem connected with personnel is the problem of increasing seniority. This is significant from the stand point of knowledge and professional ability in all areas of seniority in service. The number of people alone is not enough of an indication. For example, the benefit which the Air Force gains from a technician who has served 10 years is much greater than the benefit from a technician who has served 2 years. Therefore, we prefer long-term service in all the professional areas: technicians and engineers, quality control people, computer people, etc.

Unfortunately the attrition is too great, the conditions of service are difficult, and not everyone agrees to work for a long time in the service. The financial compensation is low and not attractive enough. Finally, some of the people leave as a result of the public mood or a lowering of value of the importance of defense, a decrease in the status of the Army, etc.

The Air Force attempts to give compensation for the difficult work and the overly modest salaries by offering challenges, good personal relationships, an opportunity to fly advanced airplanes, and an additional, not insignificant, quantity of Zionism. If there is a change in the perception of the importance of defense in the public consciousness, there is a chance that we will see a movement back into the lines of Army service.

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ISRAEL

WEST BANK MILLIONAIRE PROFILED

Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 18 Oct 85 Weekend Magazine pp 11-13

[Article by Tal Bashan: "A Dove in Hebron"]

[Text] "I knew it," exclaimed Jamal al-Amlah on the night of the 28th of September, "I knew I was right. Look, even Husayn knows I am right. He used my words exactly." He did not shed a tear ("I am too tough for that"), but he hastened to send a heartfelt congratulations cable to Husayn. There is no doubt--Husayn's speech at the United Nations was the bes thing that happened to Jamal al-Amlah in recent years.

Had Jamal al-Amlah been Jewish, his life would have been simpler. Then we could have spun a colorful and juicy tale of a simple plumber who became a millioner contractor, built the Dizengoff Towers (together with Solel Boneh), and married, much in the present fashion, two women. We could have photographed him in the elegant apartment that he would have certainly acquired in one of the towers, but al-Amlah is an Arab, and not just any Arab, but an Arab from the territories, and not just an Arab from the territories, but the head of the Hebron Village Association and mukhtar of the village Bayt Awla west of the city. On top of all that, he publicly advocates coexistence with the Jews. "They are a strong, serious, and modern people," he says, "and we must learn to live with them in peace."

It is true that he was once a plumber and that now he is a millioner. Equally true is that he participated in the construction of the Dizengoff Towers, but he does not have an apartment there, just as the towers residents do not have a summer house in Bayt Awla. His story may be juicy, but it is also full of existential contradictions: a resident of the territories, but also a builder of our state; preaches peace with the Jews, but claims to be a proud Palestinian; a subject to the territories administration, who employs former administration officers.

In view of this strange combination. al-Amlah has managed to get everybody against him: in the eyes of nationalistic Arabs he is a collaborator and an agent of the Jews. The PLO has passed a death sentence on him, while the Israelis have not scrambled to embrace him. They, too, seem to have difficulties digesting a Palestinian Arab who hotly claims that the State of Israel is an existing fact to be reconciled with. The Israeli left loathes him ("a traitor," "a quisling"), while for the Kahane right he is "another Arab that must be eliminated." Next to his villagers he is a westerner, a man of the world, while in the eyes of city intellectuals he is still a simple villager. Al-Amlah (36) walks a very tight rope and hovers between all the worlds. "I am really stuck in the middle," he says.

But if one must hover, it is better to do it in a Mercedes (280 SI). One can argue with politics, but not with money, something that Jamal al-Amlah knows better than anyone else. "With money," he says in a candid moment, "you can achieve almost anything." When he was asked on Arab television what song he wanted to hear, he requested, not unintentionally, Farid al-Atrash's popular song "Awzi falfilu," in the Hebrew translation (not the Gashash version), "Let them burst with envy"; let them all burst, all the bad-mouthing opponents: he is still here. An existing fact in the area, with his fleet of buses, the workers (between 1,800 to 3,000, depending on season) he employs and drives every day across the Green Line, with his contracting business (supplying concrete, iron, gravel, and workers, especially to Solel Boneh), with his import-export business (cosmetics, meat, clothing, cassettes, videos) and his two villas in the village, where his two wives, 10 children, and the entire tribe live.

Money is power, power is respect, and respect--to judge by the frequency with which he uses the word--is the most valuable thing for al-Amlah (except for money). He repeats the word again and again, always forcefully ("respected"). Al-Amlah's Hebrew is not fluent, heavily tinged with Arabic, something that does not stop him from lecturing at length on his views. He has almost no education (he finished high school in the plumbing department), but he has plenty of practical wisdon, as well as considerable charm (in his interview on Arab television his interviewer, Lilit Nagar, seemed charmed by him). Being aware of that, he believes in personal contact even with his greatest enemies. "People," he says, "are my hobby." Considering his delicate position, he appears rather amused, and like any real "Don," he is never alone. He always drags behind him a stream of aides-bodyguards-relatives-friends, whom he takes to luncheons, dinners, and other forms of entertainment.

Respect is precisely what he never lacked: His father was one of the village mukhtars, and he is a fourth generation mukhtar. At the age of 19 he was already the "youngest mukhtar in the West Bank." Father, he says, convinced him to assume the position as soon as possible. "He always told me: 'Instead of asking from others, let them ask from you.'" The young Jamal learned the lesson well. He was scheduled to join a group of Arab students who went to Germany to study engineering. "But precisely at that time one of the gang hijacked some plane there and the Germans canceled the whole thing." Instead, he learned plumbing at the Qalandiyah high school, and today he states with pride: "I started from nothing and became a millionaire. In 1972 I worked as a plumber with a contractor from Silwan; half a year later we were partners. After that I suggested we buy a van and drive other workers, too, but he turned it down, so we parted. I even left him my tools. I bought a Volkswagen van on installments, bcause it cost 1,800 dinars and I only had 300. My sister lent me some of the money in jewelry. Later I gave her back 116 grams of gold instead of 92, as interest payment...

"I began driving workers to Tel Aviv and working with them. I took along another friend with a van. Then I bought his van and he worked for me as a driver--he did not want to be a partner. I already had three vans. I said to myself, better get one large bus instead of all this botheration. I leased a bus from the Halhul company. A 1952 bus, what a pile that was! Then I went to Solel Boneh and suggested I bring them workers. I leased another bus, and then another. I already had five."

And so it went on and on. The story advances in geometrical progression, in step with Israel's years of inflationary prosperity. In 1980 al-Amlah already had 10 Volvo buses in good condition, and that is when the ego factor entered the picture: "I wanted my name on the buses, but for that I had to establish a company. I founded a company, of which I own 99 percent, and put my name on the buses in big letters. I opened a driving school, and there I did the same thing. I love it," he admits, "Let them all see that Jamal al-Amlah is alive and well and doing business."

Jamal al-Amlah is a born businessman. They say he buys up everything that can be bought (at a profit). People, too, if possible. There is no proof of that and al-Amlah categorically denies it, although the fact that former administration men (clerks and officers) work for him seems to point to the profitability of the relationship for both sides. The first person to greet us at his office on King David St in western Jerusalem spoke surprisingly fluent Hebrew: "Just a moment," he said, "Jamal will receive you straight away." It turned out that the man, Benny Mizrahi by name, had been the deputy treasurer of the Jerusalem town hall who had gone into early retirement and had been hired here as a programmer. "I knew Jamal when he was still small," he says, and we are reminded that indeed Jamal used to provide workers for the Jerusalem city hall.

Another famous employee in al-Amlah's company is Dudu Mofaz, former deputy governor of the Judaea District. Mofaz, who had been implicated in the affair of the persecution of Hebron residents in 1982, had left his job and is now al-Amlah's right hand. People at the military government are not too happy about this arrangement, although it is perfectly legal. Al-Amlah wonders about them: "I do not see what is wrong about this. These people are the most familiar with the area and work well. I did not take them on because they are Jews. The proof is that there were many people who wanted to work for me, but I did not hire them." And as we are on the topic of work: "I am sorry to have to say that Jews have more work discipline. For them a deadline is a deadline and plans are plans. We, Arabs, have much to learn from them in this respect."

As a born businessman, his political outlook is also based primarily on business and money: money is the root of evil (the money poured into the West Bank by the PLO) and the key to coexistence and peace with the Jews: "Once you have joint businesses, both sides would guard the peace in order to ensure profits. People who have property here speak differently from those who get money from the PLO." In addition to that, there is his personal experience ("I, too, learned in school that the Jews are monsters, but once I started working with them, I saw I could talk to them and learn from them.") Presumably, there are also considerations of personal advancement and profit. The business ventures with Israel and the good connections with the administration bore fruit for al-Amlah, particularly during the hayday of the village associations, when aside from extensive administrative competences, the authorities also funneled considerable aid money to them.

In any event, for whatever reason, al-Amlah represents a pro-Israeli ideology that is moderate to the point of naivity, or craftiness. It is hard to tell. "The State of Israel is an existing fact," he says, "and it is a mistake to think that we can destroy it. All Palestinians know that, but are afraid to admit it. Husayn, too, knows that. The proof is that he spoke as he did. We must live in peace with the Jews and learn from them--and they from us, and together we can be the two strongest nations in the world." Al-Amlah claims that the divisions behind him are increasing. "All the PLO supporters who have become moderate now say what we have been saying for 5 years." Therefore, "We are the real leadership in the territories, more so than the PLO people. I am a fourth generation leader."

He may be a leader, but so far, it is claimed against him, he has not succeeded in attrracting to his ranks any of the heavy "guns" of the West Bank notables. "That is because they are simply afraid of speaking up, afraid of the PLO. So far, anyone who spoke out openly for peace, was murdered, from Sirtawi to al-Sadat, from Nashashibi to Yusuf al-Khatib (head of the Ramallah village association)." There have been attempts on his life, too (once he was shot at, and once there was an explosive charge). The PLO has sentenced him to death ("They gave me 1 month to decide if I wanted to resign from the associations or be put on their black list") and his wife, he says, "receives several threatening phone calls every day. She is already used to it." For a while he was walking around with armed bodyguards. Now he only has escorts-friends, but as a faithful Muslim he says: "I am not afraid of death. For every person, the day he is born, it is written when he will die. The main thing is to follow your beliefs."

When talking about the dangers lurking for him, he sounds almost happy. They afford him an opportunity to show courage and manliness, and to preserve the honor so dear to him--and which, in may people's eyes, he has lost. Al-Sadat is the figure he most admires. He loves to compare himself to him. "They threw mud at him, too, called him a traitor and a collaborator. But peace became a fact." His ideal is Palestinian autonomy, with him as one of its leaders, although he does not clearly say so. "In the end, only Arabs know how to rule Arabs. The democracy of the Jews is not suitable for Arabs. We have our own democracy: the strong rules." He does not speak of a Palestinian state. He does not believe that it will come to be. "But if it does," says one of his Israeli friends, "Jamal will move to Jerusalem, otherwise they would finish him off on the spot."

He voices his line to anyone prepared to listen--especially on the Israeli side (and that, they say, is one of his problems); together with Sam Ben-Shitrit he founded a committee for Jewish-Arab dialogue, went with him abroad, talked to Jewish leaders in the Diaspora, organized a peace convention in Hebron (to which, they say, all his workers came, after being paid one work day in exchange), and set up a peace tent at Maymuna. On television he appeared at the side of Peres, in white headdress, at the house of the Wazana family. "Some people thought it was a costume," says one journalist who had been present, "they did not believe that that was indeed an Arab from Hebron. Otherwise they would have fallen on him there right away." (Kahane's people indeed threatened to do so.) Now he is organizing a political peace movement among the West Bank inhabitants. "It will be a big movement," he promises, "I have already spoken with friends in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza." He is confident of support from Jordan, too.

Despite these stands, which sometimes sound like President Hayim Herzog's monologues, the Israelis are in no rush to adopt him. "Anyone who wants to talk peace with us--people immediately find fault with him and try to figure out what is wrong with him," says former Hebron Governor Yehoshu'a (Ishu) Ben-Shahal, who is now manager of a travel agency and a good friend of al-Amlah's. He describes him as "a unique phenomenon in the West Bank, the only genuine moderate there," and as "a simple man, not stupid, and very brave." According to him, the rumors spread about al-Amlah's personal gains from political activities are unfounded. "On the contrary, he is only losing as a result, both time and money. He is donating considerable amounts of his own money to this."

Ben-Shahal, during whose time in office the idea of the village associations was raised as a moderate counterforce to the PLO, describes the government's policy toward them as a "tragedy,' and as a "gutless policy"; "First they promoted them, and justly so, then they ceased to support them for fastidious reasons. That is how we alienate even the few friends we have in the West Bank."

According to him, the fact that the authorities ignore al-Amlah is not unintentional: "The authorities claim that they want a dialogue, but I think that this is simply not true. The authorities are not interested in either genuine talks or compromise. They are comfortable with the status quo."

Thus, senior Israeli politicians do not meet with him, and he is forced to pick up any crumb of support even at meetings with the junior league or lesser officials. Al-Amlah protests: "We have been knocked about by every side. In Jordan they sentenced us to death, and the local authorities stopped supporting us. Everybody threw mud at us--both your leftists and our extremists. What do the Jews want, moderates or terror? No one is more moderate than we are. But perhaps the Jews do not want peace at all?"

But now that his honor rests on money, he can no longer back down, and so he is determined to prove that he is right, even at the price of his life. "In another 6-7 years everyone will admit that I was right and that I worked for my people, not against them."

In the meantime he continues to do business--here some import, there some export; recently he imported, with Efrayim (Froyke) Poren, video cassettes from the Far East. "Actually that did not go so well," he says. "We are stuck with a stockpile of 15,000 cassettes." Additionally, he continues to build up our country for us: hospitals (Tel Hashomer, Asaf Harofe, Sha'are Zedek), apartment houses, and hotels. His workers and those of other "raises" have become the implementers of Zionism of the 1980's--but not for long, as it turns out. "Even they have become too good to do menial work. Everyone wants to be a manager. Many have left me to become contractors themselves. Soon," he grins, "we will have to bring workers from Turkey."

For honor one has to work, and al-Amlah works hard: in the morning, at his office in Jerusalem; at noon, at the offices of the Village Association, and at night, at the village council. He hardly finds time for wife and children, and let us not forget that we are talking about two wives. The first he married at the age of 16. His second wife, Nahawan, a 25 year old beauty, he married 8 years ago. "I was less busy then," he says. "The truth is that today I would be content with one wife. Even one is enough trouble..."

He is in favor of modernization and women's liberation--for the Jews, "but not in my house." He seems to be torn between the attraction of the west and his roots in eastern tradition. Outside the village he behaves like an Israeli in every respect, spends his time at the Hilton and Sheraton, and tastes of all life's pleasures, from Chivas Regal whiskey to Havana cigars. At home he goes to prayer (the position requires it), smokes a water pipe, and wears traditional clothes (not gladly, though, considering the speed with which he changed after the photographing). In his living room he has elegant furniture from Italy, designed according to the best eastern taste, as well as a television set and sophisticated stereo equipment. But the most interesting blend of modernization and tradition is displayed in his kitchen: an electric cooker with coals ("to cook with but to feel without").

You cannot miss his two houses, marble monuments dominating, like him, the local landscape. The majestic council building is also prominent--recently built by al-Amlah in the center of the village. Some $100,000 he sank into it. The authorities gave half, and the village gave half. The administration people squirm in their chairs when that opulent building is mentioned. "He has exaggerated a little," says one clerk, "after all Bayt Awla is a rather small village."

"Bayt Awla is Bet-El [in Hebrew, God's House]," al-Amlah informs us ceremoniously, "and this building is the center for many things." The man seems to be forever building monuments to his memory. When it is a matter of honor, things seen are better than things heard. Asked what he would like to have inscribed on his headstone, he does not even raise an eyebrow, but immediately shoots out the answer: "Here is burried Jamal al-Amlah, the man who served his people and did not betray them even 1 day."

[Box on page 12]

The King of Morocco Provided Inspiration

Jamal al-Amlah and Sam Ben-Shitrit, secretary of the Association of Moroccan Immigrants, have encountered many difficulties in their joint activities on behalf of Jewish-Arab friendship. When it became known that al-Amlah had participated at Maymuna, he received threats from all directions--the PLO threatened his life, and Kahane's people promised Ben-Shitrit that they would blow up the event. "Jamal told me, 'I am not afraid of the PLO. I will take care of them. You take care of Kahane,' and that is how it was," says Ben-Shitrit, adding: "Whatever people say about Jamal, he has courage."

The idea to draw al-Amlah into Maymuna came, according to Ben-Shitrit, as an inspiration from the king of Morocco: "During my last visit there senior government members admonished me, on behalf of the king, about the fact that Israelis of Moroccan origin appear to be anti-Arab. I promised to do something about it, and upon my return I began to look for Arabs whom I could bring to Maymuna. That is how I came upon Jamal."

Al-Amlah brought two tents and 500 notables. Ben-Shitrit was pleased, and so was the king of Morocco. The proof is that he sent congratulations. Were the Maymuna participants, most of them Likud supporters and to the right of it, also pleased? "You have to differentiate," replies Ben-shitrit, "between support for Greater Israel and hatred of Arabs."

After visiting local meetings organized by al-Amlah with his people ("I wanted to hear what he really thought"), Ben-Shitrit swore that "the man really and truly believes what he says. People like him must be encouraged in this respect."

And in other respects? Ben-Shitrit is more cautious: "I set two conditions for him for the continuation of these activities: A, that he should not be involved in any way in bribery affairs; and B, that he should never lie. As far as I know, he is keeping both."

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KUWAIT

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS VOICE OBJECTIONS TO EDUCATION MINISTER

Kuwait AL-MUJTAMA' in Arabic 29 Oct 85 pp 10-13

[Article: "What Is Between Minister of Education and Islamic Current?"]

[Text] A large group of National Assembly members was scheduled to meet with his excellency the crown prince and prime minister on Monday, 21 October, to discuss issues concerning the Ministry of Education, especially the issue of its minister Hasan al-Ibrahim. But the meeting was canceled, it was said postponed, under the pretext of various justifications. What has made more than 20 deputies join forces against the minister of education and what is this minister's story with the various political sides by Kuwait?

Status of Educational Issue

The Islamic issue has top priority in the country's Islamic current. This priority is the result of the Shari'a controls and principles which govern Islamic thought. To the Muslim fundamentalists [al-islamiyun], the educational issue means building man's faith, conscience, and behavior in both word and deed. The Ministry of Education is the official agency in charge of this task. It is the agency to which society's members deliver their sons and daughters voluntarily so that it may mold them into a good generation. Moreover, the educational issue means to the Islamic fundamentalists the constructive and beneficial utilization of the country's wealth. Training an entire generation is more important than all of the oil countries' investments in the West. This is why the Islamic fundamentalists view the educational issue snesitively and actively. Talk about the priority of bringing to account the minister of education or the minister of oil is perhaps like the talk about the priority of caring for man's honor and dignity or caring for his wealth and money. This is why the Islamic fundamentalists answer quickly that the priority of bringing to account belongs to the minister of education because he is tied to an issue that concerns the honor and dignity of an entire society.

Islamic Fundamentalists and Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education has received the full attention of the Islamic fundamentalists because of the importance of the issue, as we have already pointed out. The Islamic fundamentalists have confronted the secular and westernizing activity that has been ceaselessly trying to replace Islamic values and concepts by the values and concepts of secular thought. Because the westernizing secular activity is strongly supported and backed by an enormous propaganda thrust, the capabilities of Islamic fundamentalists have been and continue to be far from the decision-making center of the educational apparatus.

The fundamentalists have waged numerous battles against past ministers of education, especially against the recent minister of education. The relationship intensified sharply in the wake of the scandal over the educational guide. AL-MUJTAMA' has written hundreds of times, criticizing the educational policy and demanding its reform. It has intensified its articles in the wake of the educational guide incident and hardly an edition has been published without criticizing the Ministry of Education and those in charge of it. The magazine also asked the public prosecutor, the government, and the National Assembly to perform their duty vis-a-vis the educational guide scandal. In edition No 612, the magazine published an article in the column "To Whom It May Concern," saying: "Now we believe that the prosecution, in its capacity as society's representative, msut raise the issue to find out this criminal's partners who now rest assured that they will not be exposed after his deportation, especially since the field in which the guide worked is a serious educational field." In its editorial of edition No 613, AL-MUJTAMA' said: "We ask the prime minister to intervene swiftly, to investigate this sensitive and serious issue, and to punish the culprits, regardless of their positions, in order to protect our sons and daughters."

AL-MUJTAMA' has continued to sound the alarm on the educational issue and has continued to write on it. In the past 2 years, it has published no less than 50 articles dealing with the issue and asking the state to reform the educational situation and to rescue the Ministry of Education from the corrupters.

All this has been coupled with parliamentary activity by the Islamic fundamentalist deputies. Esteemed Deputy Hammud al-Rumi presented to the Assembly in June 1983 a scientific analysis of the real educational situation and criticized strongly the educational policy embraced by the ministry. AL-MUJTAMA' published this analysis in one of the editions it issued in the same month.

During the election campaign, the Islamic fundamentalist candidates launched a concerted campaign against the educational policy and against the ministry's performance. The speeches of all the candidates contained lectures on the educational issue. The sole topic with which colleague Isma'il al-Shatti dealt when addressing the candidates' election rallies was the topic of assessing the educational process. There is no better proof of this than the fact that when colleague al-Shatti was asked to address the rally of esteemed Deputy Faysal al-Duwaysh, he insisted on selecting the topic of the educational process because of its importance. Moreover, the discussions of the Islamic fundamentalist voters always focused on the educational issue. If, for example, we were to examine the symposiums which AL-MUJTAMA' conducted with the candidates, we would find that the magazine let no chance go by without tackling the educational issue. Finally, when the cabinet submitted its resignation at the end of its term and with the beginning of formation of the new cabinet, the chief editor of AL-MUJTAMA' wrote in his column in edition No 703 of AL-MUJTAMA' asking the government to select a fit minister of education, saying:

"The coming phase represents a challenge to the government: an economic challenge persisting from the past difficult years, a social challenge embodied in the firmness of the domestic front, a security challenge embodied in confronting terrorist blackmail, and an educational challenge embodied in rescuing education in Kuwait from aimlessness and deterioration."

On top of all this, the political leaders still remember the successive delegations of the Social Reform Association which demanded reform of the conditions in the Ministry of Education and in Kuwait University.

Former Minister of Education and Political Currents

The former minister of education took a position hostile to the Islamic current in the Ministry of Education and in the university. He tried to deny unjustly the Islamic fundamentalists all leadership positions to the extent that he departed from the Ministry of Education without leaving behind a single Islamic fundamentalist holding the position of undersecretary, assistant undersecretary, or department head. A quick glance at the Ministry of Education's administrative leaderships shows us how much of an understanding that minister had with the liberal currents. The undersecretaries are:

- 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Khudari.
- Sa'ud al-Talab.
- Dr Ya'qub al-Sharrah.
- Ahmad Muhanna.
- 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Sa'id.
- 'Abdallah al-Jasim.
- 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Jarallah.
- Rashid al-Hamad.

Who of these is considered a supporter of the Islamic current? Despite our appreciation and esteem for many of these names which are well known for their upright character, we assert that none of them has ever been considered a supporter of the Islamic current, even though this does not diminish their status. But we are prepared to point out those among these names who are considered supporters of the liberal currents and who assumed their positions after the educational guide scandal. We are even prepared to be clearer, if our opponents so wish.

We ask the reader to review the names of the departmental directors and to try to find among them a single pro-Islamic current personality holding such a position in the Ministry of Education. We affirm that he will not.

Moreover, the liberal pens began to defend the minister in the wake of the educational guide scandal. One of the dailies supporting the left was content with publishing a number of articles not exceeding the fingers of a single hand on this serious issue. Then at the outset of the 1984 academic year, this daily heaped praise on the minister, thus astonishing AL-MUJTAMA' which expressed its astonishment on its pages. That daily then immediately proceeded to launch an assault on AL-MUJTAMA'.

We also scrutinized the pages of AL-TALI'AH and found no more than scattered references to the educational issue. This issue has never been AL-TALI'AH's main concern. So who has changed?

Disappointment

When the Islamic fundamentalists launched their campaign prior to and during the elections, they had a big hope that the government would respond to the just Islamic demands to reform the Ministry of Education and to hand it over to hands that enjoy the popular trust. But what a big surprise it was for the Islamic fundamentalists when Dr Hasan al-Ibrahim was named to head the Ministry of Education. Dr Hasan al-Ibrahim is not an untried or unknown personality. He is well known to all Kuwaitis and to all the political currents. All had expressed their opinion of him and had demanded his dismissal from the post of the university president and all felt optimistic when he was dismissed from the university. At the time, nobody lamented his departure or felt sorry for the end of his days. So why the return of Dr Hasan al-Ibrahim and why do the Islamic fundamentalists stand against him?

Why Do We Stand Against Him?

We stand against the current minister of education for the following reasons:

1. We believe that whoever takes over the Ministry of Education must believe in this society's values and creed. By necessity, the minister's principles are reflected in his plans and decisions. It is dangerous to have the Ministry of Education taken over by a man who believes in the Western pattern of daily life. His belief in this pattern is reflected in his actions and behavior. We may overlook such a minister if he took over the Ministry of Public Works or of Electricity or some other ministry. But the matter is serious when the ministry concerned is the Ministry of Education to whom our children are entrusted. We are surprised by a statement made by one of the religious deputies--a statement in which he tried to separate conduct from a leadership position, as if he wants to say that no conditions should be imposed on the individual in charge of our sons and daughters. We can find no justification for such a statement.

2. The biggest criticism made against the current minister of education when he was the university president concerned his firm and strong relationship

with the U.S. institutions, these institutions' confidence in him, and their frequent praise for him among the decision-makers. During his presidency, the university professors' opinion of him was that "Americanization is an undeniable daily fact seen in the university. What is urgently needed is to put an end to the American innoculation," as Dr al-Nufaysi told AL-MUJTAMA' on 25 April 1978. There is no better proof than the scandal uncovered by AL-SIYASAH in 1977--a scandal exposing U.S. intervention in appointments at the university. The paper published suspicious documents exchanged by the university administration and the agencies of the U.S. State Department, one of them signed by Kissinger, the Zionist who is a former U.S. secretary of state. Whoever wishes to see these documents can refer to edition No 342 of AL-MUJTAMA'. Weren't we the ones who became apprehensive of the Americans' domination of Kuwait University? Aren't we entitled to fear American domination of the entire Ministry of Education?

If the reader wants more, we are prepared to open the archive of the university during Dr Hasan al-Ibrahim's presidency.

3. The criticism made against the current minister during his presidency of the university was that the leaders he had chosen to manage the university were not up to the level of responsibility. Flagrant incidents of embezzlement occurred during his administration and violent fights erupted between the dean of office of student affairs and the students themselves and between administrators and professors. Under his administration, the National Union of Kuwaiti Students was frozen, Dr al-Nufaysi and a number of leftist professors were dismissed, Dr al-Rumayhi was threatened, and there was not a single man of opinion against whom Dr al-Ibrahim did not take a severe position. So aren't we entitled to fear for the administration of the Ministry of Education?

4. The current minister of education is the person who brought the American system of "curricula" so that the two sexes may mingle through this system. Dr Hasan al-Ibrahim boasts that he is the only one who has been able to implement coeducation in spite of Kuwaiti society and of the religious people whereas the previous presidents had failed to do so. All are aware of what this issue means to the Islamic fundamentalists.

Despite all this, the Islamic fundamentalists remained silent for a time at the outset of Dr al-Ibrahim's appointment out of their wish to think well of him and to give him another chance to gain their confidence. He did not repress or move against anybody in the Islamic current until he exploded his bomb against the religious current in his first conference, describing it as a political party and making threats against it. He then started to urge his companions to fight the religious values and to promise them a ferocious battle against the Islamic current. His attitude is also reflected in the candidates he nominated for the advisory committees which he formed to assess the educational process and through which he sought to entrench the secular current. He further angered the Islamic fundamentalists when he declared that he will restore the dancing festivals in which school girls used to participate, thus totally disregarding the recommendations made by the previous National Assembly. In the light of all of this, isn't the Islamic current entitled to ask the officials to put an end to his statements and movements? But there remains the question: What is the left's position vis-a-vis the minister?

Left's Position Toward Minister

The left attacked the current minister during his presidency of the university, considered him unqualified to assume the university presidency, criticized him severely, and demanded his resignation. The left, like the other political currents, took a hostile position toward the university president (the current minister) and said the following about him and about his administration in edition No 594 of AL-TALI'AH:

"Numerous objections were raised against that administration by a group of Kuwaiti professors who had presented new ideas which society quickly embraced in the hope of the development of a better university education that serves society as a whole and achieves its aspirations. But the opportunism of this group became immediately obvious. The group had not sought administration for the sake of change and alteration toward the better but to attain and maintain its seats, to persecute the honorable patriotic elements, including Kuwaiti professors and others, to stem student activity and to turn the university into a monopoly for some people by managing it in a paralyzing manner that favors inexperienced and greedy friends with positions or money. The university thus entered its current crisis and the raised slogans remained unchanged, issuing a hollow echo not of what takes place in the university but of the exact opposite. In referring to the published documents, we can reach conclusions and make generalizations."

AL-TALI'AH also accused the president of contradiction and schizophrenia, described him as a man who turned from a university president to a security director, and accused him of following a policy of favoritism and inaction and of being extremely indecisive. It also attacked him for freezing the National Union of Kuwaiti Students, for fighting the nationalist tendency at the university, and for fighting those university professors with ideas and opinions. In edition No 600, AL-TALI'AH described him as follows:

"Most of the signs indicate that Dr Hasan al-Ibrahim, the current university president, will be departing his position. It is the same to us whether Dr al-Ibrahim's departure is the result of his desire to move away from the administrative and student situation of the university and to devote his time to academic writing and research or the result of dismissal from a position in which the man has found himself unable to achieve what he had advocated before assuming the administrative seat--an inability that may be either subjective or objective. The current president may have experienced an inner struggle with himself over the academic situation, especially over the demands of some Kuwaiti professors calling for the establishment of firm criteria for administration, promotion, positions, and the demands for equality."

Finally, AL-TALI'AH rejoiced and saw good omens in his resignation in its edition No 608 in which it said about this resignation:

"There are several observations regarding the crisis and the resignation. The first observation is that the university president would not have submitted his resignation so quickly if he had relied on an energetic, democratic, and efficient administrative apparatus. The second observation is that the lack of academic criteria and rules led the university to the labyrinths of personal caprice. The third observation concerns the issue of a replacement. Will a new president come to replace the old one and take over the university with the same current structure of its administrative apparatus? If so, the new president will reach a dead end. The fourth observation is that the university needs, first of all, written and clear criteria and laws and needs a dynamic and energetic administrative apparatus constantly infused with new blood."

If this was the left's position toward the former university president (the current minister), then what has changed? What has changed the left's or AL-TALI'AH's position? Is the change in the former university president or is it in the left itself? This is what we will answer in the next edition.

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LEBANON

DAMASCUS, TEHRAN COMPETE FOR PRIMACY IN LEBANON

London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 14 Oct 85 p 25

[Article by Observer: "Damascus Reexports 'Tehran's' Goods to Country of Origin"]

[Text] At the end of the 1984 summer, Siyad Shirazi, land forces commander in the Iranian army, visited Iranian volunteers in al-Biqa', where he delivered a speech during the festivities Hizballah held in his honor in the Lebanese city of Ba'alabakk. He said: "We must...follow the right path and must obey our guardians for all freedom fighters, warriors, and the oppressed people of the world who follow the line of the sovereign power. We must all walk in the shadow of the sovereign power lest we deviate from the Islamic path." Then he added: "You must be united in one closed rank... and this tightly built edifice is based on our unity and the iron (?) unity represented in Iran."

Syrian officials in Ba'alabakk and Damascus heard these words and accepted them grudgingly because they believe that the "line of the sovereign power" is in Damascus, not Tehran, and that they went to Lebanon to turn it into a planet in the Syrian, not the Iranian, orbit. Nonetheless, Syrian officials allowed Iran's representatives to roam freely in Lebanon and hold meetings and conferences calling for support of the "legist's sovereign power" and the "imam's line," without exhibiting any annoyance or exasperation and without any attempts to dampen the ardor of Tehran's emissaries in marketing the revolution among Lebanese consumers, or more accurately, the doomed people in Lebanon.

In the shadow of such Syrian "tolerance," relations between some Lebanese sides, including the Unification Movement in Tripoli, and Iran grew, reviving the hopes and aspirations of Iranian leaders who had come to imagine Lebanon as a vital extension of the "Islamic revolution" in Iran and as an example they can offer the Iranians of their success in scoring victories and achieving gains abroad. Lebanon became a great psychological and political necessity for Iranian leaders, especially in the wake of their failure to export their revolution to neighboring countries. To demonstrate their great interest in Lebanon, Iranian officials this year decided to give 1 billion Iranian riyals to "spread Islamic culture and support the oppressed people of Lebanon," out of a total of 3 billion riyals earmarked for this purpose worldwide. In other words, the budget appropriated for Lebanon was one-third the funds earmarked for supporting the international jihad in general!

Syrian officials, as we have already said, maintained silence about this relationship, encouraging it at times because it served their purpose of driving out all other regional and international parties in Lebanon, and using the Iranian "legacy" to scare the Lebanese into accepting the "Syrian peace" so as to curb the spread of the "imam's line" in the streets of Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli and, indeed, out of fear of it reaching Ashrafiyah, Kisirwan, Jizzin, and other places. This effect, along with other factors, succeeded in prompting several local parties to give in to Damascus' will. Amal, which represents the Shiite middle class, rushed to jump out of the Syrian frying pan into the Iranian fire and Maronite leaders tried to outdo one another in reciting the repentence verse, pledging obedience and asking forgiveness. Zahlah, the capital of Catholicism in the east, accepted the "Syrian peace" lest it be enveloped in the Iranian shadow as was Ba'alabakk before it. This was at the local level. At the international level, it appears that Syria has succeeded in broadening the content and terms of its proxy over Lebanon. No longer is it a proxy limited to a specific technical task, such as periodic intervention to bridle the civil war in order to prevent a regional eruption or to gain the release of hostages belonging to a "respected" superpower or to free a hijacked airliner. Rather, it expanded to include the reconstruction of new Lebanon in a manner compatible with Syrian strategic interests. In this domain, it is no secret that Mr Reginald Bartholemew, the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon, took to urging politicians and Lebanese leaders of all persuasions and orientations to consult and coordinate with Damascus and heed its advice. Most likely, these politicians used to hear the same advice from Comrade Soldatov, the Soviet ambassador to Lebanon. Hence, with most international, regional, and local parties accepting the "Syrian peace," Damascus no longer needed the Iranian player in the Lebanese arena as a back to be used in a squeeze to scare and intimidate others. Departing from this development, competent Syrian authorities began pulling out "Iranian revolutionary exports" from Lebanese markets, reexporting them to the country of origin. What makes Damascus more determined to achieve this goal is its belief that a large number of these exports are of Palestinian-"Arafati" origin with Iranian labels stuck on them in order to get past the Syrian inspector who has imposed a total ban on anything connected with the PLO.

Iranian leaders are trying to rescue all the friends and supporters they can in Lebanon. Within this compass, they have made incessant efforts to ease the pressure Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban has been put under by the hot Syrian fire. These efforts, however, have not and most likely will not amount to anything because the Syrian leadership seems to be determined to bring Shaykh Sa'id's emirate to an end and to install in his place Mr 'Ali 'Id, secretary general of the "Democratic Arab Party," as Tripoli's new lord and uncrowned prince of north Lebanon and as a key leader in a new Lebanese state built on the rubble of the second Lebanese republic. Following Shaykh Sa'id's demise, the rosary beads will start falling one after the other and other groups and corners which support the Iranian "sovereign-power line" in Lebanon, like Shaykh Sa'id, will be dwarfed and cut down to size.

Some Iranian officials are shaking their heads in surprise and regret for they see their sand castles in Lebanon tumbling down one after the other. Others are overcome with rage at the sight of their Syrian ally wiping out these castles mercilessly in order to keep the Lebanese dream all to himself. Some let out sighs of pain and distress, saying: "If this is a friend, who needs an enemy?" But these sentiments do not change anything, for they know that there is nothing they can do and they have no way of pressuring or influencing Damascus into leaving them a measure of influence and some positions of domination in Lebanon. For the war with Iraq puts them in dire need of Syrian support and as long as the war persists, Tehran, all appearances notwithstanding, is too weak to protect a small group of its men in Lebanon, let alone Shaykh Sa'id's emirate and the Tripoli Unification Kingdom!

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LEBANON

SECURITY AGREEMENTS SEEN AS INADEQUATE

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 11 Oct 85 p 7

[Article by Amin al-Siba': "Amateur Statistics"]

[Text] Amateur statisticians of resolutions and agreements reached by warring factions in Lebanon between 1975 and the current month have recorded, following the last Tripoli wars, 1,624 cease-fire agreements and 331 agreements to collect heavy, and sometimes medium, weapons from the cities to put them in barracks monitored by joint security committees, the legitimate army, or the internal security forces.

These amateurs also discovered a number of ways to violate these security agreements and resolutions, some ordinary and some innovative and original, in the world of distinguishing between the shallowness of claims made at meetings and the depth of internal commitment. These actions are based on out-smarting security circumstances and pretending to comply with the decision to collect heavy arms while seeking to replace them through smuggling before some warring forces acquire expertise in manufacturing medium and some heavy weapons in their camps and small factories.

In reviewing their collected data, those amateurs say that before the ink of the agreements providing for the collection of arms from the combatants was dry, ships, trailers, and even small planes unloaded here, there, and everywhere shipments of various weapons coming from all corners of the world to all the organizations to compensate a hundredfold those who had turned over some of their heavy weapons to the security committees for the arms and ammunition they had lost.

With a little bit of ill will and much caution, caution by those observers to avoid walking into a maze of self-deception, these statisticians were intent on placing their statistics before a number of politicians at the heels of the agreement to stop the fighting in Tripoli which, in some of its articles, provided for the collection of heavy weapons to be placed under the supervision of the security committees.

The Lebanese war, in reality, did not leave the seekers of a settlement, any settlement, a chance to believe any articles ostensibly calling for optimism, an optimism refuted by reality, bitter experience, and evil intentions.

What good will a decision such as the one calling for the collection of heavy weapons do, even if it were to be enforced to the letter and upheld by one and all, not only in word but in deed, if the green lines are maintained on the street and in the soul and if cities and villages remain divided by force, by mutual consent, or by a fait accompli between this and that organization?

What kind of minimum security can be maintained if neighborhood and building lords remain the sole masters who decide how things will be shared while the defenseless Lebanese people have lost the right to live or even breathe outside shelters and woods?

What kind of security can be achieved by collecting heavy weapons--if they are indeed collected--if flamethrowers, small mortars, hand-held rocket launchers, machineguns, and rifles remain on the list of what has been classified as medium or light weapons?

What does the agreement to collect heavy weapons mean if sea and land boundaries are left wide open to blood and arms dealers and the country remains fair game for warmongers?

What kind of security is based on an agreement to postpone visits when true security is unable to impose its rules by the arms of true legitimacy on all those who have carried arms so that each group may demarcate its colony in this nation where not even a place fit for building a cave is left?

Security is a climate, and legitimacy and a law are upheld by all those who demand law and order while using its blood to drench their weapons at the expense of innocent people.

Lebanon does not need any more agreements on truces, arms collection, or the opening of this or that crossing point. What it needs is a different kind of decision which no one seems to have the ability to define, issue, or enforce. The only thing left is the outcome of the new Syrian attempt to collect arms in Tripoli which, by necessity, will spread to other cities with the same needs as Tripoli, if not more.

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LEBANON

BRIEFS

LEBANESE POUND LOSES VALUE--The exchange rate of the Lebanese pound registered yet another sharp drop in the third quarter of this year. At the end of September the dollar in Beirut closed at 18.55 pounds as opposed to 8.89 pounds at the end of 1984, a rise of 966 piasters or a rate of 108.66 percent. Thus the exchange rate of the pound fell 52.08 percent in 9 months. The pound's fall against European currencies was sharper, at a rate of between 58 and 60 percent. This level has led to a lower level of purchasing power and a higher cost of living due to consumption patterns in Lebanon, which depends largely on imports. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 12 Oct 85 p 37] 12502/13167

ARGENTINIAN WHEAT--Argentinian wheat recently won the bid invited by the Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Trade for the sale of 100,000 tons at a price of $117 per ton. Argentinian wheat for several years has been the winner and constant competitor against American or European wheat. It appears that Argentina, for economic reasons, is intent on lowering its price for wheat because it needs foreign currency. [Text] [London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 12 Oct 85 p 37] 12502/13167

CSO: 4404/127

OMAN

ADVANCES IN DEVELOPING TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS

Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 3 Aug 85 pp 46-47

[Text] On 23 July, 1985 marked the 15th anniversary of Sultan Qabus Bin Said's ascent to power in Oman and the beginning of the building of a new and modern state.

It is natural that the establishment of a modern state be accompanied by the development of a modern transportation network linking different parts of the country on the one hand and linking the country with the outside world on the other. Oman is more than 300,000 square km in area, and its coastline extends for about 1,700 km. Throughout history the sultanate has been an important port for trade and transportation between East and West. The Omani Ministry of Transportation has accomplished important achievements in the areas of ground, air, and sea transportation, which in themselves constitute three of the main pillars of the country's infrastructure. In the roads sector, the ministry designated large sums of money for road construction in the First and Second 5-Year Plans. It spent 657 million riyals on road building and paving throughout the country. The total length of roads paved up to November 1984 reached more than 3,303 km. The total length of the dirt roads paved by the end of 1984 was 18,123 km. In addition to the laying, construction, and maintenance of asphalt roads, the General Administration for Roads builds and maintains mountain and dirt roads, establishes and operates workshops, trains road workers at the workers training center, and forms and trains specialized teams in all aspects of road construction and maintenance. The administration also prepared a draft for the projects contained in the Third 5-Year Plan, which is now under study and review by officials.

In the public transportation sector, the ministry operates the sector within the bounds of the authority assigned to it. The government attaches great importance to this sector. It provides the financial allocations necessary for linking all regions in the sultanate by a permanent network of public transportation (buses). A royal decree was issued for the establishment of the "Omani National Transportation Company," the major shareholder of which is the government. The company, which will be supervised by the ministry, will manage the country's public transportation facility in such a manner as to contribute directly to facilitating transportation between the different ports of the sultanate.

In the ports sector. the ministry supervises the operation of "Qabus Port" in the capital area, which is the main port in the country. It was built to a standard which would secure the country's needs, and it replaces the small port in Matrah. The port can accommodate all types of ships and can handle all types of cargo, including the handling of containers. Studies are being conducted and arrangements being made to expand the depth of some piers in order to accommodate giant ships. Expansion of the port's storage capacity is also being arranged to match the growth of the economic and construction activity in the country. The ministry is currently conducting detailed studies into building another national port in Quryat, which is located between Muscat and Sur. A new port was built in Risut in the southern region to secure the needs of that area. The ministry operates the port of Risut, which is equipped with the latest equipment and which can receive all sizes of ships and handle cargo including containers. In addition, there is one port for oil exports and several small ports for fishermen. The ministry provides supervision and advice in the construction of these small ports to help the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing.

The port of Qabus can accommodate--according to its design and capability--about 2 million tons of cargo a year. It can store 1,200 loaded and 2,000 unloaded pattern containers. The number of ships which had entered the port by the end of 1984 was 10,310.

The port of Risut can handle--according to its capabilities--1 million tons of cargo a year. By the end of 1984, 2,182 ships had used the port. The total expenditure on the ports sector between 1970 and 1985 was 73,119,097 riyals.

In the sea transportation sector, the ministry--in accordance with the Sea Pollution Control Law--supervises, in coordination with other concerned authorities, the control of ocean pollution on Omani coasts and in its territorial waters. An emergency plan was prepared to combat pollution resulting from oil. The plan was endorsed and is being carried out by representatives of all the government agencies concerned under the supervision of the ministry.

According to the Omani Sea Navigation Law, the ministry is responsible for registering Omani ships, monitoring their serviceability and their pilots' competence, and monitoring the adherence to the national, regional, and international laws and regulations by all ships using Omani waters and ports, including the country's own ships. The ministry also supervises the application and execution of the law regulating sea navigation in Omani territorial waters.

The civil aviation sector also receives the necessary attention. The Ministry of Transportation undertakes the responsibility of applying the Civil Aviation Law, which regulates the various aspects of civil aviation. Oman also participates in all regional and international organizations which regulate civil aviation at the domestic, regional, and international levels. Because it is important for the civil aviation sector to keep pace with the construction, economic, and social activities in the country, al-Sib International Airport was constructed in the latest style and in accordance with regional and international standards. Consequently, it is capable of handling the largest aircraft. Another modern airport was established in Salalah, in the southern region, to facilitate transportation between the north and south of the country. In addition, the ministry pays special attention to improving domestic airports to facilitate speedy transportation for citizens.

In this field, the Omani Flight Services Company, an entirely Omani company in which the government participates, organizes domestic flights between al-Sib International Airport and different parts of the country where landing strips have recently been inaugurated for the operation of domestic flights between Khasb-al-Buraymi and Sur-Masirah.

The number of passengers on external flights has reached 4,640,483 since 1973 (incoming passengers: 2,478,693; outgoing passengers: 2,161,790). On domestic flights, the number reached 430,161 from 1975-84 (incoming passengers: 197,681; outgoing passengers: 232,480). The weight of imported goods has reached about 111,902 tons since 1973 while that of exported goods has reached about 19,850 tons.

To handle the increased traffic at al-Sib International Airport, a new arrival terminal, twice the size of the old one, was built. It includes 12 gates for passports and immigration. A departure/transit hall was also built which includes duty-free shops, a restaurant, a lounge, a waiting room for the convenience of first-class passengers, and a spacious departure waiting hall. The area of the travel hall was also doubled and equipped with an automatic information display.

The expansion project also includes the installation of an information display system for flights, which shows immediately any change in information pertaining to flight arrivals and departures. These capabilities will help the airport serve 500 departing passengers, 500 arriving passengers, and 300 transit passengers per hour.

At the Salalah airport, a new passenger terminal was built, loading facilities improved, maintenance facilities expanded, and the tarmac and runways modified. In addition, a study on the long-term (50-year) need for a new airport is being prepared, as well as another study for the conversion of the Salalah airport into an international one and for the establishment of a number of domestic airports in the big cities.

The sultanate has a 25 percent share in the capital in the Gulf Air Company, a percentage equal to that of its other sister countries, the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain, which together own the company.

In the meteorology sector, the ministry provided the administration with all the modern apparatus and equipment and with specialized technical cadres, due to the importance of the services the sector performs and to the importance of developing these services to keep pace with the country's needs, so that the sector can cover the various needs of air and sea transportation and of agriculture.

To ensure the safety of air transportation in the sultanate's skies, the Muscat Information Center was established to provide the aircraft using the country's airports or crossing its airspace with all the necessary services for air travel. The center also implements the sultanate's full or legitimate sovereignty by monitoring air traffic within Omani air space--over its territory and territorial waters. The sultanate obtained the consent of the International Organization for Civil Aviation making the communications center at Al-Sib International Airport one of the region's main communications centers between Asia and the Middle East.

13136/12790
CSO: 4404/50

QATAR

BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN REVIEWED

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 13-19 Nov 85 p 19

[Article: "Shaykh Khalifah bin Hamad 'Al Thani Visits Britain: Gulf-European Cooperation Strengthened; Efforts to Halt Iraq--Iran War Supported"]

[Text] The official visit of Shaykh Khalifah bin Hamad 'Al Thani, amir of Qatar, to the British capital falls within the sphere of efforts by the Gulf Cooperation Council to strengthen relations with western European nations and to explain to European officials the Arab viewpoint on numerous important Arab problems, especially Gulf efforts exerted to halt the Iraq--Iran war and the peace movements in the Arab region aimed at finding a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

The lavish official reception prepared for this occasion and the agenda of discussions reflects the level of British government attention to and desire for this visit, the first at this level in the history of British-Qatari relations.

The amir of Qatar is accompanied on this visit by a high ranking delegation that included Shaykh Ahmad bin Sayf 'Al Thani, minister of state for foreign affairs, and Mr 'Isa al-Kawari, director of the amir's office and minister of information.

It is expected that the meeting which will take place today, Wednesday, between Shaykh Khalifah and Mrs Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of Britain, will be very important. Mrs Thatcher has a strong desire these days to establish excellent relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council nations. The timing of the visit comes 1 week after the end of the Sixth Strategic Summit that was held in Musqat in order to grant the visit an outstanding character. Mrs Thatcher wants to hear a detailed presentation from Shaykh Khalifah concerning the results of meetings at this summit and the success that the Cooperation Council leadership has achieved in the area of implementing the defense, economic, security, and agricultural strategies and the composition of a unified Gulf concept for carrying out these strategies and translating them into action. The British government, which is observing this Gulf experiment with an eagle eye (as stated to AL-MAJALLAH by a high British diplomaitc source), wants to know as much as possible, especially about the great successes in the area of defense coordination.

This has ensured a greater depth in the self-defense capability of the council nations and their self-reliance in protecting their land in the face of any foreign aggression, since the core of this arrangement has begun to crystallize in the formation of the Unified Gulf Deterrent Force and the Joint Peninsula Shield maneuvers.

The problem of the Iraq--Iran war is expected to occupy a prominent place on the agenda of discussions Shaykh Khalifah will conduct at the British Prime Minister's office. Britain, which has more than once confirmed its support for international efforts to halt this war, wants to become familiar with the results of the latest Gulf efforts in this area. This is especially true after the visit by Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the Saudi foreign minister, to the Iranian capital and the great hopes for stopping this war soon that derive from this visit. Perhaps it is premature to say that the tour Shaykh Khalifah will take at the factories of the British Military Aircraft Manufacturing Organization this Friday will result in agreements to purchase British weapons, even though it is possible to say that this falls within the sphere of efforts by Gulf Cooperation Council Nations to diversify sources of armament, acquire the most modern of weapons and aircraft to strengthen their defensive capabilities, and establish Gulf military manufacturing that satisfies the region's needs in the future.

It was noted that Shaykh Khalifah's visit to Britain comes about a month after a visit by Prince Sultan bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector general in Saudi Arabia. This visit resulted in the Kingdom purchasing a contract for British Tornado Aircraft, considered among the most modern fighter--interceptors in the world. Also, Sultan Qabus bin Said made an official visit to Britain this year.

It is expected that Shaykh Khalifah will spend several days in Britain after the official visit ends Friday. Afterwards he will fly to France on 20 November on an official visit lasting several days, during which he will meet President Francois Mitterand, as a part of his current European trip.

9605/12858
CSO: 4404/82

QATAR

BIR ZAYT UNIVERSITY FACES BUDGET DEFICIT, ASKS FOR AID

Doha AL-RAYAH in Arabic 31 Oct 85 p 4

[Report on interview with Dr Muhammad Sa'di al-Faqih, president of the Board of Trustees of Bir Zayt University, by Khayri Nur-al-Din: "President of Board of Trustees of Bir Zayt University: '3-Million-Dollar Deficit in University Budget, Qatar Has Continually Supported the Steadfastness of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Territories'"; date and place not given]

[Text] Dr Muhammad Sa'di al-Faqih, president of the Board of Trustees of Bir Zayt University on the West Bank, announced that the university faces a $3 million deficit in last year's budget, and that the costs of this year's budget, amounting to $7 million have not yet been covered.

He indicated that the university has been shut down more than 10 times in the last 10 years for a period of not less than 2 months in a single year. The military authorities of the occupation are trying to interfere in the admission of students and university faculty. They are also trying to hinder students cultural activities.

He said, "What we ask of our Arab and Palestinian brothers is that they understand the actual situation through which the university is passing, and that they help us, so that the university can continue to perform its mission. We have no place to turn but to them."

He stressed Qatar's continual support for the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

This came out in a interview that AL-RAYAH conducted with Dr Muhammad Sa'di al-Faqih, president of the Board of Trustees of Bir Zayt University on the West Bank of the occupied territories.

2,500 Students, 4 Colleges

At the beginning of the interview, Dr Muhammad Sa'di al-Faqih said that Bir Zayt University is an educational institution that originated as an extension of Bir Zayt School, which began its mission in Palestine in the year 1924. Beginning with the fifties, until 1972, it was called Bir Zayt College. In the latter year, the Board of Trustees decided to turn it into a university. The first class was graduated from the university in 1976. The 10th class graduated this year. The university presently includes four colleges: sciences, arts, business and engineering, The latter college includes three branches: civil, mechanical and electrical engineering.

He added that the number of students has now reached 2,500, one-third of whom are women. The faculty numbers 240 members, 100 of whom have the doctorate, and 100 the master's degree. Administrators and workers number 390. He indicated that the university rents and administers residences for students and provides students with meals and transportation at reduced rates. A student pays no more than 20 percent of the cost of his education; the remainder is borne by the university.

He said that because of the situation in the occupied territories and the impossibility of expanding the base of higher studies, the university has limited itself in the higher degrees it confers to the master's degree in education and the diploma in translation and education.

Working With the Community

About the university curriculum and activities, Dr Muhammad al-Faqih said that the curricula of the colleges of Bir Zayt University are courses of study that have been approved on a world-wide basis. The university is a member of the Union of Arab Universities and of the World Union of Universities. "We try to have the university work with the community. For that purpose, we have scheduled hours for voluntary work, so that students can take part in the productive and instructional work of the community. Examples include: researching and documenting Palestinian history, helping during the olive harvest, doing social research, combating illiteracy and engaging in volunteer health work. These hours are compulsory and are considered part of the requirements for a university degree."

Closure and Roadblocks

About the problems and obstacles facing the university, Dr Muhammad al-Faqih said, "First, I would like to point out that the university from the beginning set for itself a general policy based on three principles: 1) a national and Palestinian commitment and obligation to the land and the people; 2) the practice of democracy in a responsible spirit within the college, as shown by student participation in college boards and in formulating courses; 3) serious academic achievement and scientific study for the students. "Bir Zayt University," he continued, "like other institutions in the occupied territories, is subject to so-called 'security measures,' such as closure and the placement of roadblocks on the highways to prevent students and teachers from reaching the university building. The university has been shut down more than 10 times during the last 10 years for a period of not less than 2 months in a single year.

"We are subject to attempts at interference with academic freedom. We do everything in our power to prevent this. Academic freedom means people's right to teach and express opinion freely on campus. As a segment of Palestinian society under occupation, the students reflect that society's aspirations and work together with it. Attempts at interference are represented by attempts to apply Law 954, which prescribes that the university allow the authorities of the military government to intervene in student and faculty admissions. As a result of the application of this law, student cultural activities have been hindered."

He said, "The goals of these interferences are well known. One of the most important elements supporting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in their land is their ability to receive a scientific, cultural and technological education, so that they can remain in their land. Naturally, this conflicts with the occupation, which does not desire this."

$3-Million Deficit in the Budget

About the financial problems facing the university, Dr Muhammad Sa'di al-Faqih said, "The university has obtained with relative ease Arab and Palestinian support to set up its new installations. The problem, however, lies in covering the costs of the current educational budget. Students contribute no more than 10 to 20 percent to the university budget under the best circumstances. Consequently, there is a permanent deficit. Sixty percent of it was covered through the university support fund to which the Arab states contribute. However, because of the current economic slowdown, the fund's contribution has decreased to 40 percent of the deficit. Currently, there is a $3 million deficit in last year's university budget. In addition, this year's budget, amounting to $7 million has not yet been covered. The university has not yet received any financial support for the current year, either from the Fund for the Support of Arab Universities or from any other agency."

He said, "What we ask of our Arab and Palestinian brothers is that they understand this actual situation, and that they help us, so that the university can continue to carry out its mission. We have no other place to turn. The people in the occupied territories cannot supply these sums of money. We appreciate the fact that there is an economic slowdown; however, we are in a position where all we can do is turn to our Arab and Palestinian brothers."

About the situation of the university's graduates, Dr Muhammad al-Faqih said, "Indeed, this is a real problem facing Palestinian society in the occupied territories now. Educational planning has to be linked to economic and social planning, and this is something that only the state can do. We are trying to overcome the problem by creating the specializations we need in the occupied territories. Studies are now underway to solve the problem in collaboration with the other universities in the occupied territories. We welcome the fact that Palestinians are participating in development operations in the Arab states; that, however, does not solve the problem."

Other Causes

I asked, "Are opportunities for work available in the occupied territories to graduates of the university?"

Dr Muhammad Sa'di al-Faqih said, "I can state that a Bir Zayt degree is recognized throughout the world. Since, as I said, the university is a member of the Union of Arab Universities and also of the World Union of Universities, there is nothing to prevent university graduates from being employed anywhere, including the occupied territories. If there is any obstacle, it has to do with other reasons."

When I asked him whether or not there were opportunities for work in the occupied territories, he said to me, "There are enough."

Dr Muhammad Sa'di al-Faqih closed the interview, saying, "I thank Qatar University for inviting us to become acquainted with Qatar and with the activities of the university. The sister country of Qatar has continually supported the steadfastness of the people of the occupied territories. They appreciate that support, both financial and moral."

12937/9190
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SAUDI ARABIA

ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL BANK IN JIZAN DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSED

Riyadh AL-RIYAD in Arabic 7 Sep 85 p 4

[Text] The agricultural bank in the Jizan district is the strong foundation of agricultural development in the district because of its continuous support for agriculture and the farmers by offering assistance in cash and in kind, in accordance with the comprehensive development plans toward effective and productive utilization of available resources and in accordance with priorities defined on the basis of a study to achieve objectives.

Agricultural work is extremely important for directing the course of development in the best possible way in order to achieve comprehensive development to get back the progress and civilization that we have lost and in order to attain what arises from progress in this world.

The key to development and progress is scientific administration, since through it social and economic change takes place and because it carries out the phases of the activity which enables society to achieve its goal because it plans, organizes, and assigns the workforce and directs, controls, and coordinates all of this human activity.

The agricultural bank in the Jizan district carries out its task and activities according to effective principles and plans which define the goals which are sought after, using methods designed to reach these goals.

The agricultural development programs in the Jizan district have met with a high degree of success because of the pleasant climate, good agricultural soil, and the abundance of rain, springs, wells, and watercourses, in addition to the material support and various loans to the farmers of the Jizan district which ensure agricultural expenditures and the financing of projects in order to meet the costs of farming. The overall goal is to increase production, improve the agricultural structure, and raise the level of agricultural productivity in order to attain self-sufficiency in crops, foodstuffs, and livestock and poultry resources as well as fish resources along the coast of the Red Sea and honey.

One of the reasons for the success of the agricultural bank in the Jizan district is that before it offers agricultural and other loans, it carries out scientific studies and studies of economic feasibility, which forms the basis for making a successful decision about the investment. It does that by examining and studying what is going on around the investor and what might affect him with regard to social, technical, economic, financial, administrative, and marketing changes.

The agricultural bank in the Jazin district through its branches in Jizan, Sabya', Samitah, and Fayfa' offers the following:

1. Short-term Loans

They are repaid within 6 months from the date on which they were obtained. They are given to finance ongoing agricultural production, such as preparing the ground for planting; buying seed, fertilizers, pesticides, and animal fodder; and paying wages for labor and all expenses for planting.

The value of these loans is usually repaid from crop yields, for whose production these loans were used.

2. Intermediate-term Loans

They are repaid within a period of not more than 10 years. These loans are given to buy agricultural equipment such as plows and tractors, trucks, irrigation motors, and spare parts as well as the equipment used to combat agricultural pests. They are also used to repair well-houses and to dig their wells as well as buildings for field workers and to level and reclaim small- or medium-size areas of agricultural land.

3. Long-term Agricultural Loans

They are repaid within a period of more than 10 years and not more than 25 years.

These loans are given to reclaim large areas of agricultural land.

Agricultural Bank Systems:

Projects administration:

It carries out legal investigations to determine whether the statements in the loan request and the property deed are true and whether they agree with the opinion of the office of agriculture and water in the region.

That is followed by field studies to determine the nature of the agricultural land or the investment project, its area, and geographical location. On the basis of the outcome of the aforementioned, it conducts a study of the economic feasibility of the project with respect to the extent of its success and its profitability which will enable the person to repay the loan, along with the profit margin for the citizen. After that, the amount of the loan is determined, and the administrative and financial measures according to which the loan is paid to the citizen are finalized.

In addition to this, representatives of the agricultural bank follow up on each agricultural project to find out whether the loan paid to the person is being used for the same project it was meant for within the framework prescribed for it.

Financing Investment Projects:

Large-scale projects:

These are financed for 80 percent of thecost, up to the first 3 million riyals, then 60 percent of the investment costs above that, on condition that the loan or the total that the borrower owes does not exceed 20 million riyals.

Intermediate-term projects:

These are repaid within 10 years, with a grace period of 2 years for dairy projects and 1 year for all others, from the date on which the contract with the bank was signed.

Loans that are approved to help finance specialized projects are canceled if work is not started on the project within 1 year of the date on which the borrower was notified that his requested loan had been approved.

The Bank Is a Practical and Scientific Expression of the Fact of Hard Work and Progress

What is not in doubt is that a material impetus is one of the most important elements of building, progress, and forward development.

Therefore, the agricultural bank in the Jizan district has embarked on the greatest practical and scientific expression of the execution of its noble services to build the edifice of agricultural progress and overall development of agriculture so as to be a mainstay in the economic and social development in our beloved country.

The fact of hard work and progress has become manifest in many ways, including:

- An increase in job opportunities for many of the people in the Jizan district.

- An expansion of the overall horizons of development and productivity in our country.

- A lessening in the future of the citizens' dependence on the government.

- A lessening in the state's dependence on imported foodstuffs, fruits, and vegetables.

- Expansion of cultivated areas.

- Distribution of lands good for planting among small farmers, along with encouraging them to cultivate it.

Bank's Activity During the Year

During the year 1403/1404 AH, the bank awarded 1566 intermediate-term loans with a value of more than 66 million riyals. These loans were distributed among the bank's four offices as follows:

- Jizan, 136 loans with a value of 10,157,599 riyals.

- Sabya', 1126 loans with a value of 37,970,877 riyals.

- Samitah, 216 loans with a value of 13,690,712 riyals.

- Fayfa', 88 loans with a value of 4,575,463 riyals.

The loans from the agricultural bank in the Jizan district are distributed amongst their objectives in the following manner:

Bases of Granting Subsidies to Farmers:

The process of giving was carried out as follows:

Loans were given for all types of large and small farms, specialized agricultural projects, meat and dairy projects, raising chickens (meat/eggs), and fishing.

The bank does not realize any profit or interest from these loans, which are repaid in annual installments over a period of 10 years, with a grace period of 1 or 2 years for specialized projects.

As for subsidies, they are made in the following manner:

- Fifty percent of the value of machines and requests.

- Forty-five percent of the value of plows, seeders, harvesters, milking machines, tractors, and all agricultural equipment.

- Fifty percent of the value of fodder, seeds, soybeans, barley, and all types of animal and chicken feed.

- Fifty percent of the value of sugar used as food for bees in apiaries.

- The agricultural bank bears 100 percent of the cost of shipping milch cows by air from the supplying country to the kingdom, on condition that the shipment be at least 50 head of cattle.

- Twenty percent of the value of equipment connected to cattle- and chicken-raising projects.

Advantages of Agricultural Subsidies

- Increase in agricultural production.
- Improvement of the agricultural structure.
- Increase in the rate of agricultural development.
- Raising the farmer's standard.
- Helping to build the national economy by increasing overall development.

This is the practical expression of the figures, statistics, and successful operations which bode well and which would not have come about without the noble directives of his majesty the king, his loyal assistant the crown prince, the rightly guided government, and the young working hands of the nation.

12547/13167
CSO: 4404/96

DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER ON SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Riyadh AL-RIYAD In Arabic 7 Sep 85 p 3

[Article by Rayhan al-Harbi]

[Text] The deputy minister of agriculture and water, Mr Muhammad 'Ali Makki, said that the government's policy of supporting the developing agricultural sector and encouraging Saudi farmers has not changed, and generous support of the producing sector in order to bring stability and self-sufficiency to the local market is continuing and attempts are being made to export to foreign markets in view of the potential there.

In speaking to AL-RIYAD, he said that besides financial support through loans and grants, an objective of the ministry's policy is to direct and guide farmers toward what will help in the development of this sector.

The kingdom's agricultural policy also tries to urge companies and farmers to increase and improve their production by pursuing the most modern technical methods that can be used, such as reducing labour as much as possible, reducing costs as much as possible, following agricultural methods and directives such as sound crop rotation to preserve the soil, and following crop rotations in the marketing field so that citizens and companies will not all rush in a particular direction and then reject the price of that agricultural product. It tries to facilitate the marketing means so as to help them get to all corners of the kingdom and outside of the producing regions.

About the ministry's goals to speed up agricultural development, Mr Makki said that the goals that the Ministry of Agriculture and Water is striving after in order to speed up agricultural development are many and difficult to enumerate because of the diversity of the fields of agricultural development and their broad dimensions. However, we can concentrate on some of these objectives, the principal and essential ones which the ministry is continuously trying to achieve. They are:

1. Preservation of natural resources.

2. Preservation of the soil.

3. Preservation of the water.

4. Preservation of pastures and forests.

5. Preservation of the fish and animal resources.

The first point, the principle of preserving our natural water resources, includes the building of dams and weather observation stations and also includes proper guidance in areas pertaining to water.

There is another element among those that we aim toward in development, and that is achieving self-sufficiency in strategic products. There are various agricultural products, but strategic products such as vegetables, dairy products, dates, wheat, and grains cannot be compared to other crops that are less essential. Therefore, the important strategic crops are being concentrated on. Also among the things which the ministry is trying to pay attention to in agricultural development are meats, dairy products, eggs, feedstuffs, and so on. We can also move toward these major goals by constantly encouraging and urging the private sector to invest in the agricultural field. For that reason the ministry is more anxious to find many farmers and those who will become farmers in the future than it is to find investors, for there is a difference between people who invest for a short period and those who invest as farmers; thus the ministry is concentrating on the latter type. That falls within one of the major goals that the ministry is striving after, which is to increase human resources trained in agricultural fields, especially the modern ones that use modern methods in spraying, planting, fertilizing, harvesting, and so on. Therefore, the ministry constantly strives to encourage those who are trained in that area and urges them to train other fellow farmers who now work or the rising generations of youth who are graduating from agricultural institutions or the agricultural and veterinary colleges of universities.

Concerning national agricultural projects which the Ministry of Agriculture and Water supports, he said:

In the area of wheat production, I believe that this point has been covered by his exalted majesty the king in many of his talks and meetings, in that the kingdom has achieved self-sufficiency in wheat through the encouragement of the ministry and grain silos or by way of imports and exports in local wheat production and by encouraging investors and producers to produce this important strategic crop in the kingdom. Also, according to the latest information which we have received from the public establishment of grain silos and flour mills, the local wheat production submitted to the establishment totaled more than 1.3 million tons. This amount exceeds our needs and our annual consumption, and so the government has begun to direct wheat production and to teach people the correct way to reduce costs, so that production will become proportionate and will be done at a reasonable cost.

The government has given attention to the fish resource because it is a very important resource with respect to nutrition and the country's food security. It has added an annex to the research center building and has carried out some surveys in the waters and gulfs adjacent to the kingdom. The Ministry of Agriculture and Water has also worked hard to establish the National

Saudi Fisheries Company. This company is built upon a sound foundation, and many citizens have shares in it. By the grace of God, it was able to ensure many of the people's fish needs, not only in the regions adjacent to the coasts but also in the heart of the Arabian peninsula, in the heart of the kingdom, and to its furthest borders and at suitable prices. This company was also able to discover some fish and marine resources that had existed in some unknown regions which had been difficult for local fishermen to get to, and they were exploited in the best possible way.

In the area of existing dairy production, which is a very important element, I believe that every citizen is now happy when he goes into a shop or grocery store and sees many types of local processed dairy products that are common, in large quantities, and of a good kind, since our production of them now covers about 54 or 55 percent of local consumption. There is still the potential to develop and increase this production so as to reach a stage of self-sufficiency, God willing, through the government's constant encouragement of production.

In the area of egg and chicken meat production, we have become self-sufficient in egg production, and we have exceeded our needs to the point that we have begun to export a large number of eggs at competitive prices to some neighboring states. Also, the production of chicken meat has increased, and so far it has been able to cover between 44 and 55 percent of our requirements. The government is constantly encouraging this production, and we will also impose tariff protections on chickens imported from abroad in order to encourage and develop animal resources in this area in the kingdom. This is in addition to the assistance that the government offers to farmers with regard to chicken feed and lowering costs and in which it plays a part.

As for greenhouses, they are considered a modern development in the world and in the kingdom. There is no doubt that these greenhouses were not as widespread in the past as they are now, and they cover many of our requirements with regard to vegetables, most of which are produced in these greenhouses. Along with ordinary, traditional plantings, 75 percent of the kingdom's vegetable requirements are covered. The produce from these greenhouses is sold in markets under clean conditions or is canned well, and prices are low. Therefore, we support and encourage these projects, especially since these greenhouses save a huge amount of water, possibly up to 55-70 percent in some cases. They also save energy and labor, whether in irrigation, harvesting, or planting the crop itself, and they protect it from the diseases, pests, and insects that attack it.

Water Shortage Problems

Mr Muhammad Makki talked about that, saying that a long time ago, at least about 20 years, the kingdom began studies of the water available in the kingdom, and a number of companies carried out studies of this sort which lasted more than 10 years. Even now there are still investment companies that are carrying out other detailed studies. Some of the studies that the government carried out a long time ago enabled us to determine our water potential and made it clear that in the kingdom there were about 20 water-layer formations or sources of water. Nine or 10 of the formations are considered to be major sources of the underground water that is used in the kingdom. A policy for agricultural development in the kingdom was drawn up for the regions where studies had clearly shown that water, soil, and good agricultural lands were available. In addition to studying water and the places where it existed, the ministry has built many dams, and there are about 173 dams in the kingdom ranging from small to large. All of them are to keep rain water and runoff from flowing into the sea or sinking uselessly into the sand. We try to keep every drop of water and hold onto it by building dams or setting up projects for irrigation as well as behind these dams, such as the projects around the Wadi Jizan Dam and the project around the Wadi Najran Dam as well as other projects. Water is also being preserved in regions where springs abound, such as the eastern region around al-Ahsa', al-Qatif, al-Aflai, and al-Kharj. Many years ago in these regions the ministry started good irrigation and drainage projects, which by the grace of God have been highly successful in this field and have helped greatly to develop agriculture and preserve these agricultural regions and villages which were about to be wiped out because of the bad drainage and irrigation practices that had existed before the government began its irrigation and drainage projects.

Mr Muhammad went on to tell AL-RIYAD that there was a new project that was still being put into effect in the region of Dawmah al-Jandal in the north, and it was also similar to the irrigation and drainage projects that the government had set up in al-Ahas' and al-Aflaj. There is no doubt that the rapid agricultural development that has taken place in the kingdom in recent years, the expansion of agricultural lands, and the increased digging of wells have caused the feeling, in some regions and around these wells, that there is a shortage of water. These feelings are not a disaster, as some believe, or something unexpected; rather it is something to be expected as a result of that drop that occurs in particular instances when many wells are dug close to one another. As for the formation itself, it is not affected by this extensive drilling that some people have been doing. Therefore, the ministry is 100 percent sure that the drop in a particular formation in a particular location does not mean that this formation is about to be exhausted or that this water formation is about to dry up; rather it is only a process that varies from one place to another. If it could be regulated properly in the manner that the ministry is always advising, which is to dig wells away from one another and to dig them in the proper and sound manner to avoid regions that cause salinity in the water or prevent the water from percolating into the wells, then much of the shortage could be eliminated. However, some fellow citizens who are permitted to dig wells dig them close to one another or close to a neighboring one, and this causes the problems that some people in some regions have been suffering from. However, this does not mean that the formation itself that is producing this layer of water has been exhausted, because the formations correspond and conform to the size of the agricultural regions or the agricultural lands that exist in these regions.

Care of Pastures and Forests

Mr Muhammad talked about this, saying that many citizens as well as non-citizens might be surprised when we say forests, since everybody thinks that the kingdom is a desert region, but in fact the truth is different. There are many forests in regions of the kingdom, especially the southern regions such as 'Asir and al-Bahah, and indeed within Najd there are forested regions where many trees are found. A royal decree was issued concerning the regulation of pastures and forests and their preservation and development. This task was given to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water, and the ministry has carried out many projects to preserve these regions. In the area of pastures, studies have shown that in the kingdom there are at least 400 million dunums of important areas of pasturage, and these pastures can be developed by building many fields and simple earthen dams that will help to prevent the water from rainfall and floods from flowing only in the valleys. Rather, they will help to raise the water level, and this water will then be distributed to adjacent areas where there is irrigation, and so the largest area possible adjacent to these valleys or near where the floods flow would be inundated. The presence of water helps to develop the resource of existing pastures and to make the plants grow in these areas after ample amounts of water have come from rain and floods. The ministry is not content simply to provide water to these areas, but during seasons when rain falls heavily, it reseeds some areas that have a good potential for the development of pastures.

In the area of forests, the ministry is also working to preserve the existing forests, and it also does reforestation in forests whose trees have gone either because of woodcutting operations that occurred in the past or because they died naturally. It replaces them with new trees and saplings, and it helps to make them grow and also to protect them by continuing to prevent these trees from being cut for firewood or by regulating this operation and putting a stop to cutting trees which have not reached the proper stage for cutting.

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SAUDI ARABIA

ELECTRICITY USE IN WESTERN SAUDI ARABIA EXAMINED

London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 9 Nov 85 p 5

[Article by Khalid Muhammad Batrifi: "Corporation Wants To Solve Consumers' Problems; Every Customer To Benefit from Discount Rates"]

[Text] Most residents in the western region are talking these days about an "electric shock"--a sudden rise in electricity bills. Is the shock real, or it is more a matter of feeling betrayed?

Electricity consumers should not have been surprised at the rise in the price of residential electricity. It is well known that non-industrial electricity rates were raised about 6 months ago, with the exception of the first 1,000 kilowatt-hours, which remained at the old rate of 7 halalas per kilowatt-hour; the rate for the second 1,000 kilowatt-hour was raised to 10 halalas per kilowatt-hour; and for the third and every successive 1,000 kilowatt-hours, to 15 halalas per kilowatt-hour.

Consumers understood that this adjustment was to fall within the framework of an effort to rationalize expenditures consumption of electricity. Customers were directed to rationalize their use of energy, cutting back wherever possible.

Dr Talal Bakr, general director of the Electricity Corporation of the Western Region, has thus far refrained from commenting on the recent public outcry and the accompanying press attacks. Here we undertake to break this silence. In our talk with Dr Talal, we asked for his comments on the current wave of protests about this rise in electricity bills for cities of the Western Region.

Dr Talal responded that he has been aware of complaints about the higher electricity bills in recent months, and he feels it is natural that these complaints--or comments--should elicit concern from the Saudi authorities responsible for electric utilities in the kingdom in general, and authorities in the electricity sector in particular. "We have of course hastened to investigate the cause for such complaints and to try to find some solutions."

He continued:

If we disregard the element of error, which in any case, in our opinion, is the exception rather than the rule, we find documented in studies and investigations, frequently conducted by us and distributed both through the newspapers as well as directly through the corporation, that whoever raises such a complaint has probably failed to notice that his bill was calculated according to the new rates. In addition, it is likely that the bill about which he is concerned is for the summer season, which is characteristically higher than that of the winter months. We in the electricity Corporation are always willing to verify that the reading on the bill matches the number registered on the customer's meter.

And in all cases, we have found so far that the readings do correspond to the actual numbers on the consumer's meter. The problem is simply that many citizens allow themselves to be influenced by what they read in the newspapers on the subject.

Dr. Talal admitted to some errors and negligence in the actual reading of the meter but said:

The corporation is making every effort to ensure that meter readings will be done accurately and at the scheduled times. Of course, some margin of unintended error or, in some cases negligence on the part of the meter readers, may occur. But the important thing is that we wish to make sure that every citizen has at his disposal sufficient means to determine the accuracy of the meter readings taken from his home so that he may compare these with his bill.

On the subject of complaints that the system of meter reading has not been carried out in an organized fashion, and that therefore some customers have been excluded from the discount rates, Dr Bakr stated:

People are afraid that if the system is disorganized, they will no longer be able to benefit from the two lower rates. As we all know, the tariffs are divided into three consumption levels based on a monthly accounting system. The first level comprises the **first** 1,000 kilowatt-hours and is valued at 7 halalas per kilowatt-hour; the second level comprises the second 1,000 kilowatt-hours used, and is calculated at a rate of 10 halalas per kilowatt-hour; everything exceeding that falls into the third category, which is computed at a rate of 15 halalas per kilowatt-hour.

But Dr Bakr guaranteed that every customer will always benefit from the first two basic rates, even if his meter is not read for 1, 2, or even 3 months. Whenever the reading is taken, the bill will be calculated in such a way that the discount rates will apply to each month separately, whether or not the meter is read during that month.

To clarify his point further, Dr Bakr gave the example of a meter which has not been read for 2 months in a row. When it is read in the 3d month, the amount of consumption registered in the bill of the 3d month will include the consumption for the two preceding months.

Let us suppose that the consumption registered amounted to 18,000 kilowatt-hours. In this case the value of consumption will be calculated on the basis of the first 3,000 kilowatt-hours at 7 halalas per kilowatt-hour, and the second 3,000 kilowatt-hours at 10 halalas per kilowatt-hour; the remaining 12,000 kilowatt-hours will be calculated at 15 halalas per kilowatt-hour.

Thus the citizen will have been given the discount rates for each of the 3 months. I should note that at the end of each year the corporation reviews every customer's account to confirm that the base rates have been properly applied for each of the 12 months of the year.

Dr Bakr also touched on the problem of the apparent discrepancy in readings of consumption from one month to another. He said that there will quite naturally be differences in the amount of consumption depending on the family's lifestyle and needs, as well as on fluctuations in temperature over the course of the year. For example, when a family travels during the summer, the house's electricity consumption will be low despite the high temperature and this will be reflected in the bill for that month. When the family returns from vacation, however, and the consumption of the electric current in the house goes up, the bill for the following month is much higher than the bill for the preceding month.

Dr Bakr thus concluded that this disparity is a natural one, but he added:

It sometimes happens that a meter reader is lazy one month and reports an approximate reading; if this estimated figure is lower than the real figure, consumption for that month will appear to be lower, even if the house is occupied. The following month, however, when the proper reading is taken, the amount for that month will be added to the remainder of unrecorded consumption for the previous month, and the bill will be higher. In such instances the customer becomes justifiably alarmed at the seeming inconsistency--but the consumption as registered is accurate.

The director reassured us that the corporation is striving to ensure that all its meter readers understand the necessity of reading the meters at the scheduled time each month, but he added:

If we take into account that each month approximately 720,000 meters are read in the Western Region, of which approximately 300,000 are in the city of Jeddah alone, we can well imagine the gigantic effort necessary to maintain discipline.

Dr. Talal Bakr pointed out, however, that each customer has his own independent account in the central computer which keeps track of what is owed and what has been paid in excess; the latter is automatically credited to the customer's account, and new charges to his bill are automatically deducted from the balance.

Electric utilities are public utilities and are thus subject to both internal and external regulation by more than one supervisory apparatus in the country, in particular, the General Auditing Department of the Ministry of Industry and Electricity. In addition, the corporation's records of its profits are stringently reviewed by the ministry as well as by the corporation's legal accountant.

With regard to the rumors that the speed of the meters has been increased with the increase in hertz, Dr Talal assured us that that is technically impossible. The electrical network can work only at 60 cycles per second; an increase or decrease in this rate by even 1 revolution would stop the electrical generator.

Dr Bakr concluded his talk with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT with some general comments on the uproar about the electricity bills:

In any event, the corporation acknowledges that constructive criticism is one of the most important elements upon which the corporation depends so that it may develop and improve its services to customers. Being of prime importance both in public and private life, electric utilities are meant first and foremost to benefit the citizens. When any individual reveals a problem with electrical service and demands that it be solved, he will have done both himself and his society a service. Indeed, it is his right and his duty to express his opinions. It behooves the authorities to take these seriously so that they may better undertake to solve problems and to develop this important utility so graciously supported and encouraged by the sovereign Saudi government of His Majesty King Fahd and the crown prince.

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AFGHANISTAN

NATIONAL FATHERLAND FRONT DETAILS ACTIVITIES IN NANGARHAR

Kabul ANIS in Dari 12 Oct 85 pp 1, 4

[Text] In addition to other social activities, the Provincial National Fatherland Front of Nangarhar during the current year has formed 19 peace councils, and has also set up 25 meetings between the various representatives of the Grand Tribal Assemblies. Furthermore, through the universal support of the people of that province, it has formed three district councils, two subdistrict and 42 village and residential councils and this project is still continuing with a revolutionary fervor.

While making the above statement, Seyyed Rahman [Zamri], deputy director of the Provincial Council of the NFF of Nangarhar in an interview with the correspondent of ANIS also stated: At the present time, within the framework of the Provincial Council of the NFF of Nangarhar there is one city council, four ward councils, one subprovince, nine district, seven subdistrict, 29 village and 58 residential councils with a total membership of 5,904 toiling people who are active and struggling to fulfill the humanitarian objectives of the NFF.

He also pointed to the main activities of the front during the current year and said: Before any other organization, the NFF is duly obligated to actively participate in the realization of the projected plans of the PDPA and the revolutionary government and by divulging the filthy nature and true character of the enemies create an atmosphere for peace. For this purpose, during the current year 11 peace assemblies have been formed by this council; furthermore, 255 tribal assemblies have been organized and the necessary protocols between various tribes have been duly signed. As a result of this activity 54 deceived individuals who left the country have returned to their homes and families. Moreover, through the cooperation and social activity of the Shenwar subprovince council of the NFF 62 armed counterrevolutionaries were captured and handed over to the government authorities. Additionally, in the same period, as a result of the activities, peaceful and humanitarian policies of our front's councils, with the cooperation of Durbaba subdistrict council, an 11-member armed band which has been fighting against our people and another 60-member armed band were captured with the cooperation of Pachiro Agam subdistrict council and handed over to responsible officials. These individuals have generally been reformed and are presently fighting side by side with other toiling workers against the enemies of the revolution.

He considered the cooperation of the people with various councils of the NFF as favorable and added: In addition to the undiminished and unflagging defense of the revolution by the struggling members of the social organizations of Nangarhar together with the general public, the role of the NFF is also worthy to note. For instance, 24 young people have joined the ranks of the armed forces voluntarily and 320 other individuals in the Gushtah district have joined the armed defenders of the tribes. On the level of the province, namely in the districts of Mumand-Darreh, Nazian and Achin of the subprovince of Shenwar and the subdistrict of Durbaba and the same subprovince a total of 1,075 young people are defending the revolution of their own volition.

He went on to add: As a result of explaining the humanitarian objectives of the party and the government by the mobile and stationary groups and elucidating the decisions and resolutions of the national and historic tribal assembly, the benefits of the laws and regulations of the local organs and the government departments, a large number of people have become quite interested in setting up meetings, staging marches and demonstrations.

Furthermore, on the level of the Provincial Council of Nangarhar, five literacy courses have been formed and become active with 94 students. Moreover, at present on the level of this council there are 16 literacy courses in which 320 students are enrolled and last year 16 persons graduated from these courses.

In conclusion, the deputy director of the Provincial Council of the NFF of Nangarhar Province stated: During the current year, 25 family disputes have been resolved through the medium of relevant commissions and 25 voluntary work groups have been organized and at the same time 40 tons of relief wheat, 1,200 cans of tea and 32 bags of sugar have been distributed among the needy people.

12719
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AFGHANISTAN

PDPA CENTRAL COMMITTEE DISCUSSES TRADE UNION IMPROVEMENTS

Kabul ANIS in Dari 26 Sep 85 pp 1-2

[Text] The trade unions of Afghanistan under the guidance of the PDPA play a significant role in the political system of the country, in strengthening of the revolutionary projects of our country, in attracting our toiling workers to participate in running the social and governmental affairs and in solving many problems of our developing national economy.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions of Afghanistan performs certain tasks in buttressing its own ranks, reinforcing its ties with the extensive masses, in mobilizing the masses around the PDPA, in directing the activities of people toward protecting and defending the achievements of the Sawr revolution, in expanding and strengthening the power of government and in fulfilling or realizing the social, developmental and economic plans.

As the masses or people's organizations, the trade unions of Afghanistan are improving both qualitatively and quantitatively. The councils of the trade unions and their primary organizations under the guidance of the party committee participate in a variety of activities such as resolving social and economic issues, realizing economic plans, reviving institutions, enhancing production level and improving its quality, generalizing progressive experiments, making an effort so as to reinforce work and production discipline, promoting economization, establishing secondary education courses, improving security and work condition of the toiling workers, organizing voluntary work groups and related work contests, creating strike groups, concluding group work contract, providing spiritual and financial encouragement for workers and ensuring the security of institutions.

To a certain extent, promotion of discipline in the work place is a matter of interest to the Central Council of the trade unions and its lower councils. There are propaganda groups who explain the party and the government's decisions and decrees to the toiling workers. Other important activities of the trade unions consist of holding meetings, distributing propaganda leaflets, presenting lectures, creating clubs and cultural homes, setting up of sports contests, sending the children of the toiling workers to the Soviet Union for a period of one month for the purpose of rest and recuperation, and holding meetings composed of labor pioneers.

Union-related organizations pay close attention to the issue of literacy, and in a like fashion they have an active share in the planning of the labor law. During last year several familiarization meetings were held in the various organizations of the trade unions of Afghanistan which had a worthy role in improving the affairs of the said unions.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions has established realtions with 184 natinal and international union-related organizations;furthermore it has obtained membership in the World Federation of Trade Unions and participates in the sessions of the World Labor Organization.

Despite the work accomplished, there are also some deficiencies in the activities of the Central Council, its lower councils and the primary organizations of the trade unions. For instance, the majority of the councils and the trade union organizations do not participate fully in resolving the social and economic problems or in attracting and encouraging the workers in the administration of production affairs.

Furthermore, the work and activities of the trade unions in preparing collectives for mutual production projects, particularly in insuring proper reserves for the social-economic development plan of the next five years, in generalizing the progressive work experiments on an extensive basis, in attracting women into the production sector, in organizing the technical immunity bill against danger in the institutions, in enhancing the level of expertise and vocational skills of the workers, and in providing the daily essential necessities for the toiling workers is still lagging.

Similarly, work contests or competitions are not organized in an orderly fashion and as a result of a lack of proper organization the production quality has diminished. Until now there have been no group work contracts concluded in a large number of the government and private institutions and the regulations adopted by the representative councils are not duly observed.

Additionally, the training, cultural and mass activities between various collectives of the toiling workers in no way provide an answer to the complete demands of the party and the government. Moreover, there are certain deficiencies in the matter of training the toiling workers with a patriotic spirit and a universalist love of work, devotion to the people, revolution and the party's ideals. In a like fashion, the propaganda campaigns against counterrevolutionaries are not carried out in an active manner, and the matter of presenting lectures and the training of the active members of the trade unions lack proper organization and no effective work is done at various levels of toiling workers' brackets. Likewise, the contents of the work-place journals are at an inferior levle and they do not practically help their readers, and the papers are not made available to the reading audience at a certain specified time or period. Further, the party press, radio, TV and other mass media facilities publish very little material on the life of the worker and the activities of the trade unions, whereas what they do publish is mainly of a general information nature.

In the same way, the activities of some of the provincial councils as regards the fight against illiteracy and its control over the pertinent operations seems inadequate. Still there are several brackets of toiling workers who are far away from the sphere of influence of the trade organizations. And there are considerable deficiencies in the matter of accepting trades, students and vocational teachers for merely what they represent.

Furthermore, the primary organizations of the trade unions network have not properly expanded throughout all the collectives, particularly in the various trade categories. Also the activities of the primary organizations are at a low level and they do not have the necessary effect on their members. Most often the meetings are held without a comprehensive and profound study in a disorderly fashion without adequate preparation and with a low attendance figure, and without active participation by the members.

Similarly, necessary care and consideration is not given to the matter of selecting, training and transferring cadres, and a considerable portion of the various cadres and the active members of the trade unions are not well-prepared; the stability of the cadres seems weak and the vacant posts are not filled as speedily as they should.

Likewise, the realization of the plans, decisions and resolutions are poorly organized and there are some deviations from the financial norms and disciplines. In a similar fashion, there are certain inadequacies in the process of selection and dispatch of the children of the toiling workers to the Soviet Union for the purpose of rest and recuperation; also the same inadequacies apply in the case of the selection and dispatch of the workers and trade union activists for the purpose of rest and recuperation inside and outside the country.

Additionally, the Political Bureau of the PDPA Central Committee has criticized the weak guidance of some of the party committees over the union councils. The Political Bureau of the PDPA Central Committee directed the Central Council of the Trade Unions of Afghanistan to take proper measures and appropriate actions in order to resolve the deficiencies or inadequacies which are present in the pertinent resolutions.

In a like fashion, the Central Council of the Trade Unions of Afghanistan and its primary organizations have been directed to concentrate all their organizational, training, cultural and mass activities toward the enhancement of the role of the trade unions in order to attract the active participation of the toiling workers in the administration of production affairs, in the growth and strengthening of the national economy of the country, in defending the achievements of the Sawr revolution and buttressing the government power, in improving the work and living conditions of the people, in enhancing the level of public knowledge, political awareness and professional know-how of the toiling workers. Similarly, they have been directed to seriously protect the interests of each and every worker and defend workers' justified wishes and demands as far as the laws and regulations permit, and in the true sense of the word, change the trade unions into a school for the economic and revolutionary training of the toiling workers.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions and its primary organizations are duly directed to concentrate their activities toward enhancing the role of the toiling workers in resolving social and economic issues, in upgrading the level of output and production, in improving production quality, in properly receiving new economic reserves and the sagacious utilization of the existing possibilities and potentials, in promoting economization in the generalization of work-pay system and in encouraging the adoption of progressive experiments. In a like manner, they are obligated to create favorable and necessary conditions for the workers to be able to learn a second trade and prepare collectives in devising mutual production plans.

It is also advisable that in order to insure the proper realization of the production plans, the matter of work contests/competitions and the extensive participation of all the workers be seriously considered, and likewise the role of the trade unions ought to be enhanced so as to meet this challenge. Similarly, the winners of work competitions ought to be rewarded both materially and morally. The experiment of holding production sessions ought to be generalized as a form of incentive or motivation. Due care and attention ought to be paid so that in all the government and private institutions, the group trade agreements are concluded as soon as possible, the undertakings of both parties to a contract are properly carried out and regulations for holding such sessions ought to be duly enacted. Likewise, the matter of organization, effectiveness and usefulness of voluntary work ought to be ever more improved.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions is hereby directed to study the issue of the formation of societies of scientists, engineers, innovative production technicians and the inventors of the country, and through the cooperation of pertinent governmental institutions and various other departments present its proposal for the creation of related societies to the Central Committee of the PDPA.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions and its primary organizations are duly directed to pay serious attention to the matter of safety, hazard-free work environment, health, transportation and living conditions of the workers and the immediate families of the collectives' toiling workers. They should study and discuss the reports of the leaders of the economic institutions and make necessary decisions in resolving the social, economic and everyday living issues.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions and its primary organizations ought to pay serious attention to the matter of improving, strengthening and intensifying the mass work, training and cultural activities of the toiling workers in the work place and at home. They ought to familiarize all the toiling workers with patriotism, internationalist devotion, friendship with the people of the world and the great friend of the people of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union. They ought to incite the people of Afghanistan to oppose imperialism and war, incite their hatred and their irreconcilable attitude toward toiling workers enemies. They ought to promote the people's sense of devotion to the party and the revolution, the country and their fellow countrymen, their love of work and discipline. They ought to encourage the people's consideration for basic moral norms and honor the time-honored traditions. The people ought to be made to handle their work equipment with more care and regard the general public's possession with respect. In order to insure the fulfillment of the above-stated goals, they ought to make use of every possible means such as written, oral, instructional and training propaganda campaigns to the best of their ability.

The party press, radio, television and other mass media facilities ought to reflect ever more on the vital and comprehensive subjects pertaining to the life and activities of the trade unions, and all the toiling workers. Likewise, the press and publication industry ought to pay proper attention to the needs of the toiling workers and in publishing and circulating the necessary pertinent items. The training of the active members of the trade unions ought to be fundamentally improved. The active members of the trade unions ought to expand their relations with the masses ever more, and through individual and collective work they should promote and propagate the policy of the party and the revolutionary government on an extensive basis.

They ought to strengthen the literacy project of the toiling workers, particularly that of the members of the trade unions. They ought to take active participation in realizing the land and water reform, the growth of the cooperative movement and in enhancing the effect of trade unions over the toiling workers.

Particular attention should be paid to the selection of the children of the toiling workers who are sent to the Soviet Union for rest on the basis of merit and due consideration for justice so that there is no encroachment of the permissible norms and likewise the workers and active members of the trade unions who are selected to travel abroad or inside the country for the purpose of rest and recuperation should be given similar treatment.

The activities of the various councils and those of the trade union organizations ought to be concentrated ever more in encouraging the toiling workers to voluntarily join the armed forces of the DRA, in providing more security for the institutions and creating defensive groups. The activities of the trade unions ought to be directed more than anything else, toward care and consideration for the betterment of the politico-military situation and buttressing the revolutionary government in the localities.

Efforts should be made to improve and strengthen our relations with national, regional, international, socialist Arab and Islamic trade organizations and particular use ought to be made to benefit by the experiments of the trade unions of progressive socialist countries which are adaptable to our country's cirsumstances. Furthermore, particular effort ought to be made so that the trade unions through intensive propaganda campaigns can introduce the reality of the Sawr revolution and its achievements to the people of the world.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions of Afghanistan and its lower councils are duly charged to improve and strengthen their organizational and mass-directed activities, enhance the growth of their own ranks and expand the network of their primary organizations. They ought to pay particular attention to the matter of improving the process of planning, completion of methods and alleviating the problems faced by the councils and their primary organizations, creating a decisive approach in dealing with certain work situations, holding regular meetings and enhancing their role. They must try to encourage the toiling workers to become active in all the collectives and various categories of trade union primary organizations, and with due consideration to the fact that such organs in the future will be the fundamental organs of the country's national economy, the formation of their organizational structure ought to be accordingly completed; and in a like fashion, the work schedule of the day-time workers of the development projects ought to be properly organized. The method and form of selection, training of the cadres ought to be improved and stabilized. Proper effort should be made to draw the rural- and worker-based cadres, as well as the young men and women toward the leading roles of the trade unions according to their merit, moral and political competence, and their sense of duty. Also serious attention and care should be paid to the matter of training these people in order to provide an opportunity to enhance the level of the people's demand and expectations.

The matter of payment for membership dues and registration fees ought to be duly improved.

The Social Sciences Institute of the PDPA Central Committee is duly directed to improve the training quality of the cadres and the active members of the trade unions and cooperate with the Central Council of the Trade Unions of Afghanistan in order to prepare and regulate the necessary guidance procedures for the improvement of the trade unions' activities so that it will be possible for these disjointed and unorganized unions to become more unified and they will according attract the workers to a more unified front.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions ought to try to improve the technical and material security of its sister councils and provide the necessary and favorable conditions for their work.

The party committees ought to improve and strengthen the method and modes of party guidance over the trade unions, and provide the necessary and practical assistance in order to resolve the work-related problems and those resulting from the enhancement of the councils' authority and their primary organizations. They should support and encourage their logical innovations and listen regularly to the pertinent proposals of the responsible officials and the members of the party who are active in the trade unions, in the meetings of executive bureaus and their primary organizations.

The operations of the trade unions' councils ought to be reinforced with skilled, decent and powerful cadres and the party nucleus must similarly be buttressed. The inappropriate changes of the cadres ought to be prevented and proper consideration should be given to the matter of training and enhancing the skills of the pioneering cadres in guiding the economic collectives on a continual basis.

The Council of Ministers of the DRA, the ministries and all the government departments are obligated so that in the 5-year social development planning program of the country, the issue of construction of cultural and educational buildings, construction of workers cafeteria, dormitories, construction of scouts' palaces and camps, hospitals and polyclinics are all taken into consideration in the relevant planning. Similarly, the Council of Ministers ought to make proper decisions for strengthening the technical and financial stamina of the trade unions.

The Medical and Polytechnic Institutes of Kabul together with the Central Council of the Trade Unions of Afghanistan are obligated to devise proper plans and decisions regarding necessary security and protective measures in various areas of production industries, construction, exploitation, transportation and other areas during the year 1365 [21 March 1986 - 20 March 1987].

The Ministry of Justice is hereby obligated to present the draft of the labor law to the Revolutionary Council of the DRA for approval.

12719
CSO: 4665/16

ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH USSR FURTHER EXPANDING

Kabul HEYWAD in Dari 30 Sep 85 p 2

[Text] The permanent economic commission of the governments of the DRA and the USSR during its fifth session, which was held in Moscow from 24 August to 2 September, while assessing the results of the execution of the resolutions of the fourth session indicated that the aforementioned recommendations and resolutions have been carried out quite successfully and favorable results have been achieved.

Accordingly, during the last year three Transport Technical Services Institutes for Kamaz trucks with a capacity of 955 trucks, Transport Technical Services Institute for oil tanker trucks with a capacity of 300 trucks, Technical Service Station for preparing trucks for sale at the port facilities installations of Heyratan complex, repair workshop of Kamaz trucks, the first phase of Jangalak factories renovation, transmission of power from the border of the Soviet Union to Mazar-e Sharif, construction of olive processing plant in Jalalabad, discovery of oil reserves in Pol-e Khamri, construction of crop seeds control laboratory, construction of three soil and agrochemistry laboratories in the cities of Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif and Jalalabad, and the first phase of the new steam plant in the city of Kabul were completed and became operational.

Likewise, the volume of trade between the DRA and the USSR has increased and the protocol for the exchange and transaction of goods for the year 1985 has been signed and has already been put into effect successfully.

Moreover, in the early part of 1985 a new loan agreement for 168 million rubles was signed between the DRA and the USSR in Moscow in which the various aspects of the economic-technical cooperation of the Soviet Union in the most significant projects which had been proposed at the fourth session of the idea exchange commission have been foreseen.

While making the above statements, Seyyed Morteza, the first secretary of the government planning committee, stated: The economic cooperations of the Soviet Union form the basic and determining factors of our country's furture economic development. In 1363 [21 March 1984 - 20 March 1985] alone the volume of consumer goods assistance of the Soviet Union to the DRA amounted to 200 million rubles. The volume of the production of the projects which were set up in Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and put into operation constitute 75 percent of the productions of the government sector factories.

After the victory of the glorious Sawr revolution, with the technical and economic cooperation of the Soviet Union, nearly 40 projects have become fully operational, and at the present time the Soviet Union is practically helping in setting up 65 various other projects which cover virtually all the areas of social and economic services. From among such projects we can mention the establishment of transport institutions in the government sector, the development of electric energy, the development of fuel and foodstuffs industries, the irrigation and revitalization of roads and training of the national cadres. The share of the Soviet Union comprise 70.01 percent of the total predicted foreign assistance for the current year and according to the projected plans until the end of the current year nearly 30 projects will be either partially or completely operational with the cooperation of that country.

The permanent commission for cooperation between the two governments of the DRA and the USSR is one of the most important mutual commissions which is held alternately in Kabul and Moscow annually. During the meetings of this commission the results of the previous resolutions are investigated and it is in such meetings that the overall outline for economic cooperation between the two countries in various areas are accordingly determined.

12719
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AFGHANISTAN

ARTICLE EXAMINES AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS IN HELMAND

Kabul HAQIQAT-E ENQELAB-E SAWR in Dari 14 Oct 85 pp 1-2

[Text] The province of Helmand covers a total area of 62,337 square kilometers which is approximately one-tenth of the entire area of Afghanistan. This province is considered one of the important agricultural regions of the country with a cultivable land area of 97,965 hectares which is entirely irrigable and a total area of 5,541 hectares of natural and artificial woods.

The soil of this province is suitable for the cultivation of many industrial and agricultural plants and varieties of fruits. Its major products consist of wheat, barley, cotton, watermelons, grapes and pomegranates which are offered abundantly for sale to the inhabitants of the region at reasonable prices and some are exported to neighboring provinces.

Before the advent of the revolution a handful of large landowners took possession of the major portion of the agricultural lands. However, during the years after the revolution about 35,000 hectares of land belonging to the feudalists and some government land was distributed among 27,000 farmers' families with little or no land.

In order to eliminate some of the mistakes of the first phase and insure better organization of land affairs, providing fair and just water and land deeds distribution process, the work on the second phase of implementing the land and water reform in the Helmand Province began in the second quarter of the year 1362[21 March 1983 - 20 March 1984]. Until now the work of settlement of 6,993 acres of land belonging to 4,898 families has been completed and a total of 4,220 land deeds have been distributed among deserving farmers.

At the present time, three land reform operation groups are active in the headquarters of the army in the districts of Nad-Ali and Nahr-e Saraj. The village councils of the farmers, which total 33, have been able to play an active role in realizing the transformations of the land reform. Through direct help from these councils, together with the party, government and agricultural organs' assistance, during the first four months of the current year land disputes of 973 families pertaining to 19,400 acres have been properly settled, while at the same time 977 land deeds were distributed among as many families and water distribution disputes of 985 families were accordingly settled--50 percent of the above-stated activities were carried out during the fourth month of the current year.

A source from the land reform office of Helmand Province stated: In comparison to the first four months of last year, the rate of settlement of disputes and distribution of land deeds has considerably increased. In the near future several other farmers councils will be created, and along the same line in order to explain and elucidate the goals and the significance of the democratic land and water reform pertinent training and educational courses affiliated with the farmers' councils have been set up in some districts.

At present, the work of implementing the democratic land and water reform is continuing in 43 villages and in two other villages of Ab-bazan and Seydan of Nahr-e Saraj district the process of implementing land reform has been completed. In the villages where the implementation process is in progress, 27 farmers' committees have been created which have appointed the water-distributors and their assistants to function in a free and democratic atmosphere.

The settlement of land disputes and distribution of land deeds have turned our farmers into active participants in the revolutionary transformation, so much so that our comrade Babrak Karmal, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee and president of the DRA Revolutionary Council has said: "Only through active participation in the process of revolutionary transformations can the farmers expedite the fulfillment of their genuine happiness and prosperity. As far as farmers are concerned our policies are just and in complete conformity with the tenets of the Islamic religion and they enjoy perfect legitimacy and justifiability."

The hard-working and respectable farmers of the province of Helmand have become aware of the fact that our party bases its activities and decisions on the interests, wishes, customs and favorable traditions of the nation. It is for this reason that they defend and support the democratic land reform as one of their just and historic aspirations which is but a manifestation of their vital interests. Similarly, it is the same motive which propels them to actively participate in the process of implementing the land transformations. It is only through their effective use and proper utilization of the land that they can enhance their living conditions and buttress the national economy by raising the level of farm production and bravely defend their properties against the inroads of the counterrevolutionaries.

Right now, three mapping and surveying teams together with the land and water reform implementation operation groups of the province of Helmand are busy carrying out their assignments. Until now about 90 percent of the usable land in this province has been surveyed and all the pertinent information which has been gathered through cadastral services: maps, charts and proof of property ownership, will be put at the disposal of the groups in charge of land and water reform implementation at the proper time. Only ten percent of the agricultural land has not been surveyed or mapped for the mere reason that these areas are mostly remote or inaccessible.

The issue of securing water for farming and its just distribution for the benefit and prosperity of the farmers is as important as the ownership and distribution of land itself. Under the existing conditions in our country the implementation of land reform without securing water distribution will have no meaning at all. The Helmand River has been and continues to be a brimming source for irrigating the vast areas of agricultural land in the capital and other districts of this province. In the irrigation system of this region large artificial waterways and canals of Baghra, Shamalan, Darvishan and Nahr-e Saraj and some smaller waterways and traditional subterranean water channels together with natural spring waters are used. With proper consideration to the pertinent laws and regulations regarding water utilization in agriculture, the Irrigation Department of Helmand Province through its efforts and strivings regarding a better organization, just distribution and proper use of water in farming has taken some positive steps, and the representatives of this office in the second phase of the land reform have played an active role and produced worthy results in establishing the water-rights of the farmers. Furthermore, this office has made great efforts in safeguarding, protecting and reorganizing the system of irrigation in the province.

As regards the work and activities of the Irrigation Department of Helmand in the first quarter of the current year the responsible official of the said office stated: In addition to a proper and just distribution of water to farmers and formation of farmers' committees, through the use of bulldozers over 1,465 cubic meters of local materials have been utilized to reinforce the dams of the waterways of Adam-Khan, Qaleh-Gaz and the subterranean channels of Zarrieh. Likewise, 13,185 cubic meters of earth and local materials have been used to buttress the banks of the above-stated waterways.

There are a total of 16 farmers' cooperatives in the province of Helmand. The Farmers' Cooperatives Union has seven stores. During the first quarter of the current year 3,850,240 afghanis worth of consumer goods have been purchased by these stores and during the same period 3,893,650 afghanis worth of goods have been sold at reasonable prices with a net profit of 209,997 afghanis.

12719
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AFGHANISTAN

MORE LAND DISTRIBUTED AMONG FARMERS

Kabul DEHQAN in Dari 6 Oct 85 p 8

[Text] In a superb and magnificent gathering on Thursday 3 October for the purpose of continuing the work and activities of the second phase of operational plan of the democratic land and water reform, for the benefit of toiling farmers of the country the official land ownership deeds were distributed among 210 farmers families with little or no land in the villages of Deh Razi, Juy Shiran, Juy Borj, Tarvaki in Balkh district, Balkh Province.

The DEHQAN reporter who had been dispatched to the scene also reported: In the jubilant gathering, which was formed for this purpose in the Khajeh Parsa Gardens in Balkh district, the farmers from the villages of Deh Razi, Juy Shiran, Juy Borj and Tarvaki all turned the meeting into one full of excitement and emotion by shouting mottos such as "Long live our people's government," "May comrade Babrak Karmal, the leader and sympathizer of the farmers live a long and healthy life!" "Long live the PDPA."

In this superb and magnificent gathering comrade Dr Abdul Ghafar Lakanwal, member of the PDPA Central Committee and minister of Irrigation and Land Reform, comrade Mohammad Sharif, party and provincial secretary of Balkh Province and a number of responsible agricultural officials participated and the meeting started with the recitation of a few verses from the holy Qoran in a gesture to wish blessing and prosperity to the people and the country. At first the party and provincial secretary of Balkh Province talked about the basic agricultural policy of the PDPA for the purpose of improving the living conditions of the country's farmers and the importance of the official land ownership deeds.

Thereafter, the minister of irrigation and land reform relayed the sincere and warm greetings of Babrak Karmal, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee and president of the DRA Revolutionary Council, to the farmers of Balkh district which was received with particular warmth and excitement by the farmers who expressed their emotions by applause and shouting the motto "Long live comrade Babrak Karmal our philanthropist leader." Comrade Lakanwal talked in detail about the progressive goals and policies of the party and the revolutionary government and asked the farmers to mobilize their efforts in order to realize the objectives of the democratic land and water reform--this righteous and long-sought desire of the farmers of the country--so as to increase agricultural production and defend the achievements of the land and water reform; furthermore it will be possible for the farmers to benefit more effectively from the government assistance in this regard.

After that, the official land ownership deeds were distributed among 210 farmers' families with little or no land. At this point, a farmer called Mohammad Ghaza, on behalf of the farmers of Balkh district made a statement and expressed his appreciation from the party and revolutionary government and said: Afther long years of poverty and adversity, we the farmers, who have been at the mercy of the landowners, as a result of the blessings of the revolution have become free and through the good auspices of the party and the revolutionary government, headed by our dear friend and comrade Babrak Karmal, we've attained our long-awaited wishes at last. We, the toiling farmers of Balkh district pledge our honor that in the same way that we have protected the popular revolution for over seven years will take up a shovel in one hand to plow the land and arms in the other to defend the party and the revolutionary government with the last drop of our blood.

12719
CSO: 4665/17

MORE LITERACY COURSES CREATED

Kabul ANIS in Dari 26 Sep 85 p 1

[Text] In the current year on the level of the residential council of Qaleh-i-Musa more than ten family disputes have been resolved and more than four cases pertaining to the dossiers of four prisoners, which were prepared by the National Fatherland Front, were sent to the pertinent authorities for due process.

Moreover, during the same period six literacy courses each with 120 students were created. These courses are being taught by the literacy teachers.

Regarding the resolution of the needs or requirements of the local residents a source stated: One of the measures which has so far been carried out in the region is the construction of a mosque through government help in Nowabad area of the Qaleh-i-Musa.

Furthermore, regarding other needs of the local people such as the creation of a kindergarten, health clinic and the installation of coin phone booths, on several occasions the pertinent authorities have been notified, but up to now no practical action has been taken in this area.

The source went on to add: During the current year the above-stated council has also been able to create one students' parents commission in the Zarghuneh secondary school and one group of defenders of the revolution in this region. There are 33 local inhabitants who compose the defenders group including seven brave women of the region who are protecting the security of the region 24 hours a day.

The source also said: On holidays and other days of the week, the employees of the residential council of Qaleh-i-Musa in various gatherings and meetings carry on an extensive propaganda campaign as regards the laws of the local organ and government departments, the decisions and decrees of the Grand Tribal Assembly, the goals of the party and the government of the DRA, the objectives of the NFF and divulging the filthy crimes of the counterrevolutionaries to the people of the region. It is for this reason that the toiling people of this region have played an active role in the realization of the laws of the local organs and the government departments.

12719
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BRIEFS

OFFICIAL CLAIMS SOVIETS SUFFERED 'IRREPARABLE DAMAGE'--Qom, 25 Dec, IRNA--An official of the Islamic Alliance of Afghan Muhajideen, Wednesday described as "moral victory" the resistance of his oppressed people against the "dastardly" invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet forces. He added that since the occupation the Soviet Union has suffered "political defeats" in all international forums. Speaking on the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion the official said that despite the maryrdom of a million civilians, the imprisonment of over 150,000 innocent people and the destruction of more than a third of residential areas the Soviets have suffered irreparable damage. In spite of being a superpower, they have utterly failed to quell the heroic resistance of the Afghan Muslims and have not the least damaged the high Islamic morals of the mujahideen. The official praised the cooperation among the Shia and Sunni Afghan revolutionaries and notes that their unity was the prime factor in liberating large areas of the Muslim homeland from the claws of the Soviets and their internal agents. In conclusion he denounced international conspiracies and flatly rejected negotiations on the fate of Afghanistan. He said the Afghan mujahideen can learn (?valuable) lessons from the Islamic Revolution of Iran on how to determine their own destiny. /Text/ /Tehran IRNA in English 1844 GMT 25 Dec 85 LD/ 12228

MUJAHIDIN IN CONTROL--Tehran, 25 Dec, IRNA--Over 80 percent of Afghan territory is under the control of Afghan Mujahideen, said Hojatoleslam Gholamhoseyn Arefi here Wednesday. Hoj. Arefi, accompanied by 160 Ayghan theologians from Qom Theological School recently returned to Iran after a 7-month visit to Afghanistan. He announced that the purpose of his visit was to strengthen the unity among Afghan Muslim combatants. The unity between different groups of Afghan mujahideen as well as their joint operations has panicked the joint Soviet-Afghan fores. Afghan mujahideen forces are hiding in the mountains and highlands of the country from where they check engineering and other operations of the joint Soviet and Afghan Government forces and attack them. The hojatoleslam said that despite his Marxist and anti-Islamic beliefs Babrak Karmal nowadays attend religious ceremonies in an attempt to deceive the people of Afghanistan. /Text/ /Tehran IRNA in English 1750 GMT 25 Dec 85 LD/ /12228

CSO: 4600/149

IRAN

BRITAIN 'ADMITS' SHIPMENT OF ARMS FOR KHOMEYNI REGIME

London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 7 Oct 85 pp 16-17

[Article by 'Ali Nurizadeh: "Uncle Napoleon and Aunt Thatcher"]

[Text] Several days ago a speaker for the British Ministry of Defense admitted that it had sent a shipment of Chieftain tanks, spare parts and other weapons to Iran.

What are the reasons for this announcement?

AL-DUSTUR has obtained documents, reproduced here for the first time, that reveal the details of this deal, which breaks Britain's supposed neutrality in the Gulf war.

Ten years ago, Iranian television showed a 13-part series called "Da'i Jan Napoleon," or "Dear Uncle Napoleon."

The star of this series was a retired sergeant in the Iranian army at the beginning of the Pahlevi period who was considered by his family and relatives to be the head and shaykh of the family. After several years of retirement, the old sergeant gave himself a promotion, and started claiming to be a general in the army who would have made it to field marshal, had it not been for the opposition of the British. The retired sergeant went so far in his fantasies as to imagine that he was Napoleon II, hated and eventually condemned by the British.

The scenes in this series were so funny and sad at the same time. Uncle Napoleon would rant at his family, "You ignorant people, when will you understand Britain's animosity toward me? They want to kill me and destroy me, just as they did with my friend Napoleon. You have to realize that in this world, no woman can conceive without the knowledge of the aging lion, Great Britain. Rain does not fall without a signal from Downing Street."

Uncle Napoleon represented his generation in the Middle East, the generation that had seen the greatness of Britain before the Second World War, and had not lived to see Britain's fall after the war.

Although this generation passed into history, its ideas did not pass with it. There are still many among us who think that London is the center of the world, and that nothing happens in the world without the permission of her majesty's government.

It is not just ordinary people who are stricken with the "British disease." There are also kings, princes, presidents and millionaires who try by any means to win Britain's friendship, especially after the triumph of the Iranian revolution, most of whose leaders, it turns out, were Masons. Iranians still remember the shah's last interview in exile, when the famous British journalist, David Frost, asked whether he believed that the British had had a hand in the fall of his regime. He replied, "If you lifted up Khomeyni's beard, you would see underneath it the label 'Made in Britain.'"

When I went with Professor Khaldun al-Sham'ah to the residence of Sir Anthony Parson, the last British ambassador to Iran before the revolution, I told him this story. Although Sir Anthony was frank in his responses to our questions, he refrained at that time from responding to our question about the British role in the Iranian events and the shipping of arms and military equipment by Britain to Ayatollah Khomeyni during the previous 6 years. Even though Britain's partiality toward the ayatollahs would not have been difficult to conceal, the Conservative government had been able, until last week, to assert that there was a certain distance between it and the Islamic Republic. This even applies to its allies in Washington, who are assumed, according to reports, to have exerted pressure on Britain a number of times to stop shipping military equipment to Tehran.

Every time, Britain would claim that it would not sell arms to Iran or Iraq as long as they were engaged in war.

Last year, when Great Britain delivered three military vessels to Iran, the British Ministry of Defense announced that Iran had bought and paid for these ships during the shah's regime, and that Britain did not consider them to be military vessels.

This policy led to the widespread opinion that the British were behind the ayatollahs, and that Britain needed Khomeyni in the region in order to try to gain some status in the Gulf.

Last week the opposition Iranian National Resistance Movement, headed by former Iranian prime minister Dr Shapur Bakhtiyar, made public a collection of documents the publication of which caused some embarrassment to the government of Margaret Thatcher. These documents, which the movement obtained from government sources, point to the continued flow of arms from London to Tehran, not through private intermediaries and companies, but rather directly through the British Ministry of Defense.

British newspapers published many of these reports after receiving information on these documents from the National Resistance Movement, something that the British Ministry of Defense could not deny. On the contrary, the Defense Ministry spokesman announced that the sale of Chieftain tanks and equipment as well as spare parts and weapons revealed by the documents had in fact occurred. The spokesman claimed, however, that this agreement had been made at the time of the shah, and that Iran had paid for the shipment 7 years ago, but that Britain had frozen it because of the war, and then lifted the ban recently. The British spokesman did not indicate whether Britain considered the Iran-Iraq war to be ongoing or concluded, nor why Britain had changed its position.

There is no doubt that anyone who had followed the cover story on the Kala Company in the last issue of AL-DUSTUR would not have been surprised by the reports circulating in the British press on British arms sales to Iran. Three days ago AL-DUSTUR, based on a report of the British Defense Ministry, revealed the company's role in the arms deals and in espionage operations against opposition figures in Britain.

British officials cannot be unaware of the role played by the company, which is after all a foreign company governed by British laws. The documents that the Iranian National Resistance Movement decided to publish exclusively in AL-DUSTUR contradict the particulars given by the British Defense Ministry spokesman, who would have one understand that the Chieftain tank deal was to be the only deal concluded by the Defense Ministry. One might well ask oneself also the following question: If the I.M.S. Company, which is under the British Defense Ministry and was mentioned in the document, is the only government company to deal with the regime of Ayatollah Khomeyni, what do British authorities think of similar deals totaling billions of pounds concluded with the Islamic Republic during the war years by British companies connected with the government, like D.B.I., A.L.T., T.S.C., Contraves, DMI, Plessey, and Marconi? The above-mentioned companies do not produce washing machines or pharmaceuticals. Their products consist exclusively of rockets, radar equipment, cannons and spare parts for aircraft.

David Steele, the head of the British Liberal Party, said last week in response to the reports in the British press on the military cooperation between London and Tehran, "I find these reports difficult to believe. How can the government of a democratic country like Britain supply arms to a reactionary, violent, terrorist regime that has killed thousands of people and has disregarded and continues to disregard the most elementary of social and human rights for Iranians and continues to oppose an end to hostilities with Iraq?" Steele threatened the Thatcher government with a parliamentary inquiry and demanded that British Defense Minister Michael Heseltine explain to Parliament the reasons for his approval of this deal, and why he has disregarded the official British position, which supposedly is to remain neutral in the Iran-Iraq war and not send arms to either side.

A number of British members of parliament in the Labour Party have attacked the Thatcher government for supporting the regime in Tehran. A labor union president who attended the annual convention of the Labour Party in Bournemouth attacked the Thatcher government, saying, "Those who believe that Britain has a role in the continuation of the war and keeping Khomeyni in power are not mistaken. The documents that have been published reveal Britain's secret relations with the worst regime the world has seen since the fall of Hitler."

What are these documents the publication of which has shaken Britain?

The documents consist of papers marked "Top Secret", reproduced verbatim below:

The Iranian Islamic Republic
Ground Forces/ Army

Office of Military Logistic Sales and Purchases, London

Deputy Chief of Logistics (Training and Equipment Sales)

Dated January 1985

Weekly saying of the Imam Khomeyni: "Islam is a school for the development of humanity."

Following these lines the text begins with a reference made by Col Rasikh Ahmadi, chief of the Office of Weapons Sales of the Iranian ground forces in the Kala Company (see the cover story in the last issue of AL-DUSTUR), to a meeting held at the Kala Company attended by representatives of I.M.S. and Allport, both companies under the British Ministry of Defense.

Colonel Ahmadi reveals that the British Ministry of Defense had agreed to grant Iran's requests to buy a large quantity of arms and spare parts, on condition that these weapons be sent to Iran in complete secrecy.

In the following paragraphs of the document, we read that the shipments would be sent to Iran from the Brinznopton Air-Force [as published] airport, which is located in a British airbase 70 miles from London. The arms are to be transported to Iran in unmarked aircraft.

In the third paragraph, Colonel Ahmadi requests that the Iranian Ministry of Defense use foreign Boeing 747 aircraft to ship the British arms, for which the Kala Company will have to make 15 trips to Iran.

Colonel Ahmadi recommends that the crates for the arms be labeled "automobile parts" so that their real contents are not discovered. He also insists that the company transporting the crates of arms not be informed of the nature of the cargo. He also recommends that the captain and crew of the aircraft not be informed of the contents of the shipment. After announcing the possibility of new agreements for the sale of arms by Britain in future meetings with I.M.S. and Allport, the chief of the Iranian ground forces office states that there is a list enclosed with the document containing the kinds of weapons and spare parts that will be sent to Iran by the British Defense Ministry.

The letter ends with the signature of Col Rasikh Ahmadi.

After the publication of these documents, we no longer find absurd the words of Uncle Napoleon, who used to say, "If the earth shakes, look for Britain."

12727
CSO: 4404/361

BRIEFS

QOM DEMONSTRATION AGAINST MONTAZERI--Tehran, Dec 18, IRNA--In its English, Arabic and Perisan broadcasts Tuesday the BBC World Service invented a news report which was a blunt demonstration of the deteriorating craftmanship of the radio in its wonted insinuative reporting. Without quoting sources, the radio said that a group of people had staged a demonstration in Qom this week voicing a protest against the election by Iran's Experts Assembly of Ayatollah Montazeri as the prospective spiritual leader of the Islamic Republic after the demise of Imam Khomenyi. Contrarily on December 11th, a large group of people and members of the Ulema staged a demonstration in Qom whereby to voice their support for the Ayatollah and their welcome to the decision of the Experts Assembly. IRNA, too reported the news on the same day. BBC, however, fell short of saying on what day the alleged demonstrations had been held in the city. In a speech to the rallying people on the same day, a prominent member of the Ulema in the city Hojjat ol-Eslam Banifazl highly commended the election by the assembly in lieu of [as received] himself and the rest of the religious community of the city. The radio's malicious reporting about Iran and its crude invention of insinuative statements would only suggest, in our view, that the sun of the propaganda empire of the BBC is fast on its doomed fall. [Text] [Tehran IRNA in English 1605 GMT 18 Dec 85] /12640

CSO: 4600/147

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